# Z; A Boy

REV. C. E. CRANDALL

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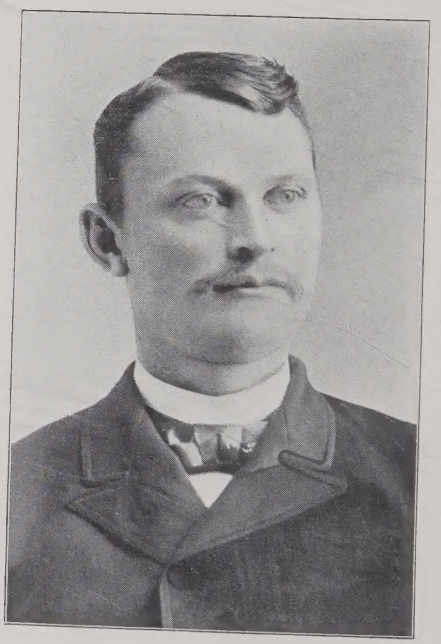
# Z; A BOY.



Very Truly Yours
C. E. Crandall

# Z; A BOY.

By

REV. C. E. CRANDALL.

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To

My many friends,

THE BOYS WHOM I LOVE IN TRUTH,

THIS HUMBLE LITTLE VOLUME

is dedicated.

# PREFACE.

I HAVE watched with jealous eyes the many shoals and breakers on the sea of life which threaten disaster to the characters of our pure, precious boys; and in the hope that this book, like a danger-signal, may warn some of them off the cruel rocks of temptation, I have undertaken these unpretentious chapters.

The story is taken from real life, and the incidents recorded are true to the lives of the characters; and their history may serve as a guide to others. Every incident related is truth. W—— is a growing city in Kansas. May Hargood is the wife of a man who has, to date, been a member of two General Conferences; and many of the persons represented in the book still live and labor for God in this year of grace 1905.

If this little volume but leads a few of the boys to a proper appreciation of virtuous manhood, and helps them to avoid the mistakes common to youth, the author will feel doubly repaid for the effort.

C. E. CRANDALL.

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# Z; A BOY.

## CHAPTER I.

# The Picnic.

In no place was the summer vacation hailed with more delight than in the city of W——. It was a time-honored custom for the good people of that Western city to give a picnic to the school children at the close of school; and an annual excursion to a certain beautiful grove, a distance of about four miles, was a great event in each year's history. Young and old, children, teachers, parents, and patrons of the school, all joined in the festivities.

June had lagged tardily this year; so thought the children, wearied with their long winter tasks; but the annual picnic day had at last arrived. No happier company ever assembled in the verdant groves of June than those who did honor to this occasion. The scene was one of mirth without alloy. The notes of the birds were not more joyous than were the merry peals of laughter echoing through the river dales.

Just as the last touches were being given to the long tables laden with dainties indispensable to the full enjoyment of the day, an unexpected arrival attracted the attention of the merry-makers. So intent had each one been on trying to add his quota

to the success of the holiday festival, that a long caravan of dusky, canvas-covered wagons, drawn by mule-teams which were driven by sun-tanned sons of the prairie, had approached unobserved until within a few rods of the river ford, a short distance from the grove. This meeting was a mutual disappointment, as the picnickers had hoped to enjoy the full right of way of the grove; while the freighters—for such were they of the caravan—had driven hard all forenoon in order to camp under the shade of the trees, and there, undisturbed, partake of their humble repast.

After fording the river the freighters began to corral their wagons, in the style of the plains, on the opposite side of the road from the pleasure-seekers, a place affording less shade and comfort. Their disappointment, though silently borne, was discernible in their surly faces. Meanwhile they were being silently watched by the children, who were awestruck by their appearance and strange maneuvers.

The older ones of the picnicking party were seen discussing a topic which seemed to be of great interest to them. Finally a conclusion was reached, and they broke the spell by crossing the road and inviting the freighters to dinner. A kind, elderly lady had been chosen spokesman. Her pleasant address at once won the hearts of the rough plainsmen, and chased away the frown that had settled on each brow.

In answer to her question, "Will you be so kind

as to come and dine with us?" the older men answered promptly, "Yes, thank you, ma'am; if you wish us to;" and the younger men threw their slouched hats into the air crying, "Three cheers for the clever gumption of the good people of W——!"

Among the freighters, however, there was one small boy who did not take part in the merriment of his companions, but concealed himself as much as possible behind one of the large wagons, while the others started eagerly to partake of dainties such as they had not tasted for many a month.

The kind, motherly eyes of the lady had seen the retreating figure, and followed it with interest. As the others were crossing the road, one well-grown lad turned and called to the child: "Skulkin' again as usual. Come along. Don't be a baby and lose a rare treat by your foolish shyness."

This rude speech was apparently unnoticed by the boy, who was leaning against the side of the wagon, his whole frame quivering with emotion. Instead of returning to the grove with the others, the lady approached the child, and said, "My little man, won't you come and dine with us?" The motherly tone of the lady's voice caused him to startle, and a crimson flush suffused his sun-tanned face. Bowing low, he raised the tattered remnant of a straw hat from his head, and answered, "Yes, thank you, ma'am; if you wish me to."

She did not speak, but her eyes filled with tears as she looked into the dark blue eyes, for the first time raised to meet her gaze. She stood for a

moment studying the child before her. He was a boy of twelve summers, sparely built, and rather small for his age. His attire was meager indeed. Large rents in the well-worn trousers, fastened by rude cloth suspenders, exposed the sun-tanned knees. His bare feet and ankles showed long exposure to wind and sun. A very ragged shirt through various rents showed patches of a body which, but for exposure, would have been very fair. A straw hat, with part of a rim and a portion of a crown, adorned his head, and sunny curls stole through holes in the hat, and played in the breeze. The blue-veined brow showed signs of suffering too plainly to be overlooked by the kind-hearted lady.

Presently advancing she took one of the small trembling hands in hers and said coaxingly, "You will come with me, won't you?" He only repeated, "Yes, ma'am;" then, giving a glance at his attire and again looking into the eyes of the lady as if he would read her soul through them, he turned and ran down the hill in the opposite direction from the festal party, and left the lady alone. But the manner of the child told her that he was truthful, would fulfill his promise by coming to the dinner, and she would have an opportunity to speak to him again. She slowly retraced her steps, stopping now and then to glance in the direction the boy had taken, in the hope of seeing him reappear; but there was yet no sign of his returning.

"Why, Mrs. Sails," exclaimed many voices, as she approached the tables, "where have you been?

We have been waiting for you to review the tables to see that all were right before we sat down."

Further waiting was thought unnecessary, and they all sat down to enjoy the repast. It was indeed amusing to see how greedily the hungry freighters devoured the dainties, and to hear their rude comments on the excellency of the food and the superior manner of its preparation.

Mrs. Sails did not eat, but kindly served wherever she could make herself useful. Although no perceptible shade was on her pleasant face, she could not entirely conceal her anxiety, and she seemed somewhat nervous as the gay party chatted pleasantly around the festal board. At last she sat down by a lad of the freight gang, and said to him:

"Will you please tell me something about the little boy who is in your company?"

"Certainly, ma'am," he answered. "That 's the queerest cub you ever saw. Mr. Bleucher—that 's the boss—picked him up somewhere, though where I can't tell you. He 's a strange specimen of humanity, Z is. That' s what we call him, just Z, because he is always doing the last thing on earth one would expect him to do. Why, when the rest of us have our booze and get off on a high lonesome, he skulks off alone, and says his prayers, reads his little worn Testament, or sings camp-meeting songs. That 's the kind of a queer little cub he is. Right now, I suspect, he is saying his prayers or kissing an old woman's picture that he carries with him. He is n't a bad boy, though. Just

kind o queer. He 's obedient and kind, and he seldom complains, though he is a little hard used sometimes,—just to tease him, you know, for he 's as tender-hearted as a girl."

Mrs. Sails had listened attentively to all the young man had said, but the conversation was interrupted at this point by the arrival of Z himself. His appearance was changed somewhat, the result of a thorough bath which had removed the dust and dirt from his person. He had also donned a ragged coat that partly concealed the defects of the torn shirt. The rents in his trousers he had drawn together and fastened with small willow withes. The golden curls had been carefully combed, and played in even ringlets around the sun-tanned neck and brow.

Mrs. Sails watched him with interest as he accepted a proffered seat at the table and sank into it while a crimson flush mantled his brow.

"Look at him now," whispered the young man who had been talking to Mrs. Sails.

Z gave a timid glance at the large crowd, and then, bowing his head, grew very pale, as his lips moved in thanksgiving to God. When he raised his eyes, they met the gaze of Mrs. Sails, whose face was bathed in tears. This little scene caused a hush to steal over the assembly, as it was observed by all. However, the merriment was soon resumed.

Z quietly partook of what was set before him, and, although many watched him inadvertently, his eyes met but few glances, and these he answered by

blushing crimson. How different was it with the other freighters! Having been treated kindly, they returned the favor by telling rude jokes and long-spun yarns of adventure, which neither they nor any one else had ever encountered.

Z did not tarry long at the table, but soon arose, and, going directly over to the train of wagons, began to make preparations for departure. Though many eyes watched him closely, so intent was he upon his task that he did not seem to notice any one.

A lull in the conversation at the tables made the freighters restless, and they began to prepare for their journey. As they crossed the road, they hurled taunts and jeers unsparingly at Z. Oaths and curses enough to pain the most thoughtless were launched at the frail child, who bore it all with Christian fortitude. O, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the total blindness of those bound by the chains of the tempter as manifested in those careless men!

"Here, youngster," shouted one, with a chilling oath, "why have n't you hitched my team? Do n't your little old Testament say, 'Do unto others as you would have others to unto you?' "

"Hey, you simperin' saint," cried another, "what were you standin' there for, gazin' at those pretty girls, and prayin' for them instead of doin' a kindness to your best friend by helpin' me out a little? Do n't you know that 's the way to fulfill the law and the gospel?"

"Well, girl-face," cried the third, "why do n't you spend some of your sweetness on me, and give

me a lift? I don't go much on a religion that does n't show itself in self-sacrificin' deeds o' kindness."

So went the round of curses, taunts, and jeers, without provoking answer from Z, who, having prepared his own team, was helping the others skillfully, but with his head bowed, avoiding the glances directed to him.

The picnickers had filed out into the road to watch the departure of the freighters, and heard plainly all that was said. Mrs. Sails listened with an aching heart, trying to catch the eye of little Z, that she might, by a look, let him know of her sympathy. Just once did he raise his head, and look into the face of Mrs. Sails, who, he felt, was his friend. He tried to speak, but his lips only moved in silence. Then he bowed his head as if in prayer to Him who is a friend indeed.

The freight train moved on over the hill, and the festal party returned to the grove. Many were the ejaculations over the scene they had just encountered: such expressions as, "Did you ever see the like?" "Such heathens!" "Burning shame!" and other like remarks indicating disapproval of the conduct of the freighters toward the unfortunate child in their thralldom.

After expressing an opinion on the subject, most of them dismissed it from their minds. Not so with Mrs. Sails. The picture was constantly before her; she was thoughtful and silent all the afternoon. Although she tried to be cheerful, she was heartily glad

when the hour arrived for the close of the festival and for the party to return homeward.

We will now more fully introduce Mrs. Sails to our readers. She was a widow above sixty years of age, who had for years devoted herself to the service of Christ, with a faculty of scattering sunshine wherever she went. Her face, though not handsome, was lighted up with a heaven-born charity that "seeketh not her own." Since the death of her only son, she had occupied an apartment in the hospitable home of her brother, one Mr. Caldwell, a grain merchant of the city of W——. Having but a meager income, she was obliged to live economically and had but little to spend for charitable purposes. This seemed to be a great cross to her, as her benevolent heart responded to every human need.

That evening, when Mr. Caldwell came home to dinner and all were sitting around the table, Mrs. Sails told him all about the picnic. She described everything in her own way, and in a way that she knew would please him. She told him about the freighters, their coming to the picnic, describing in detail their rough and uncouth manners, and especially their profane and coarse language, making a profound impression upon him. Then she turned and placed a hand upon the head of his only son, a bright-eyed boy about ten years of age, and said:

"How would you like to have your own little Arthur under the influence of such society as that?"

"Why, Sarah!" exclaimed Mr. Caldwell, "what do you mean by thinking of such a fate for my boy?"

"I think it possible," she replied, "for just such a misfortune to befall one who has been reared in a Christian home; and the world is so cruel."

"O, Auntie!" exlaimed her niece, "why don't you tell them about Z? I am sure if I were to tell the day's happenings he would be the first subject in my recital of events."

"I will speak of him presently," replied Mrs. Sails, "as soon as I can collect my wandering wits sufficiently to do the subject justice."

After a brief silence she began by telling how she first met Z; then gave an interesting picture of his personal appearance; dwelt at some length upon the marked piety of the child and his apparent unhappiness. She closed by saying in a coaxing tone:

"Now, brother, can't you think of some place in your business to employ him, and thus rescue him from his present condition?"

Mr. Caldwell was a Christian, and his sister's pathetic story moved him very much, but reverses in business had made him cautious. Therefore his reply was more from the standpoint of business than of Christian charity.

"It would seem all right from your point of view," he said, "on the charitable side only, concluding without investigation that the lad is strictly honest and all right morally. But suppose I should establish this ragged urchin in my business and then be robbed of house and home by him, thus leaving me and mine penniless, how would that appear to you as the outcome of your proposed deed of char-

ity? Besides, I have no opening at present; and if I did have, the work would be such as would require a man's strength to perform. So there is no use in talking to me about rescuing that lad, who, I am certain, has more to tell about than we are able to see. For my part, I do not believe it is according to human nature for any one to treat a boy as you say he is treated if he be not bad enough to deserve all the rough treatment he gets."

"O, papa!" exclaimed Edith, "he has such honest eyes, and—"

"Nonsense, daughter; don't talk such folly to me," replied Mr. Caldwell. "For my part, I 'm not certain but that Judas Iscariot had what people call honest eyes."

With this remark Mr. Caldwell picked up a morning paper and began to read it. This was a sufficient hint to the others that the conversation had become distasteful to him, and he wished it discontinued.

After the usual routine of household duties, the family retired. Mrs. Sails sought her own apartments, and sat down by the window. The charm of the soft summer twilight set her mind to musing on the events of the day. At last she spoke aloud. "One more day's work lost,—one more failure to accomplish good in the name of my Lord. I am certain that God sent me to meet that poor child in order to assist me in sending a ray of sunshine into his unhappy life; but I have let the opportunity pass unimproved. The day has been a failure to me."

Failure? The hand of love that records every heart-throb of true Christian charity does not write it so. When eternity reveals the crowns of rejoicing, these are the deeds for which the enraptured soul will say, "When saw we Thee an hungered and fed Thee, or naked and clothed Thee?" After kneeling beside her window and in prayer commending the unfortunate child to God for His protection, she retired and was soon in peaceful slumber.

We will leave the old lady in her repose for a while and return to Z. Z's mother lived in an adjoining State. When he was a small boy the death of his father left his mother a helpless widow with six small children to support, Z being the fourth child. The mother's ill-health and the expenses incurred by continued sickness in the family rendered them destitute, and one by one the older children went away from home to seek employment in order to be self-supporting, and thus in a measure relieve the mother in her struggles with poverty. Two manly little boys and one cheerful little girl—the three eldest of the family—had found homes among their friends before two years had passed; therefore only Z and two younger children were left for the mother to support.

At this time Joseph Bailey, a brother-in-law of the widow, came and found that, although the older boys were doing what they could to assist their mother by the savings from their meager earnings, still her continued ill-health made it impossible for her to keep her little family from want.

"I am very poor myself," said Mr. Bailey, "but I will take the oldest child you have at home with me, and do what I can for him."

The mother had a great struggle with her feelings before she could give her consent for her child to go hundreds of miles away from her; but that seemed the only thing to do under the circumstances. The boy was anxious to be doing something to help his mother, and this proposition of his uncle seemed to offer the opportunity, as the latter had promised to assist him in getting employment.

The morning soon came when the child was to start away with his uncle. The mother had spent a sleepless night; but in the morning there was a look of calm resignation on her face, though it was ashen pale. She had consigned her boy to the tender care of God, and her trust in Him was firm. She placed her hand on the head of her boy, and spent some time in silent prayer. Then, with eyes long since refusing to shed tears for the relief of her aching heart, she seemed to be trying to look into the very soul of her boy as she said:

"Go, my son, with a mother's blessings and prayers following you. In moments of temptation breathe the name of Jesus in prayer, and rest by faith in His love. I know you are a Christian, and I shall fully trust you to keep close to the Lord."

The journey of three hundred miles and more was made in due time, and Mr. Bailey had learned to love his helpful little companion before they arrived at his home. The boy was kindly received by

his aunt, who was a noble Christian woman, and all the family soon learned to love him.

The winter months passed pleasantly enough for our little friend, as he attended the country school with his cousins. He had formerly been very studious, and was advanced beyond most others of his years; therefore he prided himself in striving to be the best scholar in the school.

With the spring came a great affliction to the humble home of the Baileys. The husband and father became prostrated by injuries received in the Civil War, and was a helpless cripple. Monroe, Mr. Bailey's oldest son, a boy of about thirteen years, secured a position on a farm as chore-boy, and our little friend Z was employed as a herder of sheep on a neighboring ranch. About this time Mr. Bailey received a letter from Z's mother stating that her health had greatly improved, and her second son had an excellent position; therefore it was possible for the family to be reunited and still make a living easily; so she desired her boy to return to her. Mr. Bailey sent for Z, and, after the latter had read the letter from his mother, he said, thoughtfully:

"No, uncle, I could not think of returning home to be an extra burden to my brother. I can earn my own living, and, besides, I owe you a debt of gratitude which I can never fully repay. I must help Aunt Mary and Monroe to support you and the little ones."

It was of no use for the uncle to declare himself able to get along without the boy's assistance. He

returned to his employment, and through the summer devoted one-half of his meager earnings to the support of his uncle's family. During the summer months he was on the prairie each day with his herd of sheep. This gave him an opportunity for study, and his time was well improved. He was infatuated with his books, and hoped to become a well-informed man. His kind disposition and steady habits won for him the favor of his employer, and when the winter came he was employed as chore-boy while he attended the school again. This gave him great joy, as his cousins attended the same school.

The winter months passed pleasantly enough, and in the spring our friend was again employed at his old station. The opportunities for study had been so well improved that he was considered the best scholar of his age in the country.

In midsummer came the grasshopper plague, that has become prominent in the history of some of our frontier States. This brought nearly all the farmers to the verge of want, and threw the laborers out of employment, our little friend among them. A number of the farmers, when it was possible, sought other business, and consequently some were employed at hauling freight from the State to different parts of the Indian Territory.

One of the farmers who was thus employed was Mr. Bleucher. He was a deacon of one of the churches in W——. He had met Z a number of times, and when he wanted a teamster he chose him for that position. When Mr. Bleucher consulted Mr.

Bailey about hiring the boy the latter said, "Yes, I will trust him to you, as you are a Christian, and will certainly do right by him."

But Mr. Bleucher was only a professor of Christianity, such as try to hide a black character under a cloak of religion. While at home he was very pious to all outward appearances, but when away from home and in rough society he was one of the roughest of them all. It was probably with a view to cheating the boy out of his wages that he chose him instead of a grown man. And this is how Z came to be with the freighters.

He had been employed nearly a year with Mr. Bleucher when we first met him in our narrative. Here he received an insight into human life in its most depraved condition. Scenes of lawlessness unfit for the human eye to witness were constantly brought to his view. In dissipation, lewdness, and debauchery, Mr. Bleucher was the ringleader of the gang; and for profanity none could surpass him. He greatly delighted in card-playing, and often boasted that he could drink more rum than any man in the crowd before becoming intoxicated. Men in this business frequently lose all self-restraint, and you can imagine how revolting all this was to a child reared in a Christian home and himself a Christian. How he must have been grieved when he saw such demonstrations of the exceeding sinfulness of sin! It was no wonder that he spent much of his time in prayer and the study of the precious Word of God. How his heart must have ached as he saw

the unspeakable misery and degradation of the human race, even under the shadow of the cross of Christ, which furnishes complete redemption from all sin to whosoever will partake of its gracious benefits! How much he longed for some kind missionary to teach those wayward men of the Savior's dying love! And yet before them was the bleeding Lamb of God, with power to cleanse from sin; but Him they had rejected—aye, crucified afresh, and put to an open shame.

God pity the fallen and hasten the time when the knowledge of Christ shall cover the earth as the waters cover the deep of the sea. Then shall the true light dispel all darkness from the human heart.

## CHAPTER II.

# In the City of W——.

We will return to the freighters we left as they started from the scene of festivities to the city of W——. A drive of a little over an hour brought the train to the city. Halting at a livery barn, the teams were duly taken care of, and the teamsters were called to receive their pay.

This was on Friday afternoon, and the wagons could not be loaded again for another trip until the following Monday. Each man was given his portion, instructed to be on hand early Monday morning, and then dismissed to his own pleasure until that time. Z came, after all the rest had gone, and asked for his wages. Mr. Bleucher hastily drew a five-dollar bill from his purse, and thrust it into the boy's hand. Z looked at it a moment, and then said:

"Please, Mr. Bleucher, I have received nothing for four months, and but a small portion of the amount you promised me for the rest of the time I have been with you. My uncle's family may be in need, and I would thank you very much for at least a larger portion of my dues."

"O, get along, you abominable young hypocrite," replied Mr. Bleucher, smothering an oath that

seemed to rise in his throat. Remembering that he was at home, where he was in the habit of putting on a sanctimonious air, he choked back the bad language, and assumed the air of an advising Christian. "It 's wrong," he said, "for you, Z, as you profess to be a Christian, to come with that plea of an uncle's family to assist when you only want to spend the money for your own pleasure. Five dollars is quite enough for a young prodigal like you to spend in riotous living for two days. When you learn more of your New Testament, you will know better how to treat both men and money. So get along with what you have."

"Look here, John Bleucher," exclaimed Thomas Patterson, a leader among the freighters, "you are treating that boy meanly enough; and if I were you I would n't say anything about religion, for it 's my candid opinion that the child has more true religion in his sun-tanned body than could be rendered out of a whole meeting-house full of such Christians as you are." With this remark Thomas Patterson gave the boy a two-dollar bill, and said to him: "I did n't hire you, and it was not my team that you drove, but you have showed me many a kindness, and deserve a better reward than I am able to give you, as I am very poor. Bleucher knows you told him the truth; but he is a hardened, conscienceless old sinner, and does not stop a moment to tell a falsehood in order to hide his meanness. You will be sure to come back and go with us again. I may find a place for you with my teams. The boys have been

hard on you, but they were trying to make a man of you, and have you give up those silly religious notions of yours, such as are only fit for whimsical old women and silly girls to entertain. For my part I would not have you develop into the kind of a rascal that Bleucher is for a great deal. Although you are in no wise related to me, I like you."

These last words, coming from the only man in the crowd who had been kind to the boy, induced the latter to draw a comparison between the infidel and the professor of religion, and his faith wavered. He wondered if, after all, religion might not be a myth; but almost unconsciously he whispered these words in prayer, "Lord Jesus, be with me now." The shadow was instantly dispelled, and the peace of God filled his soul. A vision of his home life, and the remembrance of love and peace in the Christian home of his uncle, caused the last year's scenes of lawlessness and debauchery to be seen in a very hideous light, and Z earnestly thanked God for the blessings of the Christian religion. But O, wolves in sheep's clothing! could you see the awful consequences of your conduct in cases like this, you would certainly prostrate yourselves before a Throne of Grace and beg for mercy. God help the professed follower of Thy dear Son to have clean hands and a pure heart!

Z offered a silent prayer for the enlightenment of God's presence within the soul of his friend, and Mr. Bleucher, his face white with smothered rage, turned to an old friend of his, who had come in time to hear Mr. Patterson's words, and remarked:

"That is just the way. God's children have always been persecuted by the infidels, and I suspect always will be; but we 'll come up through great tribulations."

Dear friend, my reader, should you encounter scenes similar to this, let me entreat you to get very close to Jesus. Let the Divine life of the Son of God flow into your soul. As a branch receives life from the parent vine, so let life and light from Christ Jesus illuminate your soul and dispel every doubt. Whether it be professor or not that brings the doubt to your mind, it comes from the Tempter, and is but one of Satan's many devices to rob your soul of its inheritance at God's right hand in heaven.

Z took his small possession, and went directly to a clothing-store to make a few purchases in order to be less an object of ridicule. There meeting a kind-hearted clerk, he was assisted in securing a respectable outfit, which he put on; and, wrapping his old clothing up in a neat-looking bundle, he stepped out upon the street, feeling much more comfortable than before. Now raising his eyes he was enabled to observe the scenes in the familiar streets of W——.

W—— was a western town that had sprung up as if by magic. There was but little order in the arrangement of the buildings, but the streets were wide and regular. Almost every branch of business was carried on quite extensively, but no more conspicuous was any center of trade than the licensed saloon, the *legalized gateway to perdition.* The

streets were crowded with teams, and the sidewalks with a rushing, hurrying people. Everything gave evidence of a populace whose object was the accumulation of wealth as the only purpose of life.

W——, at the time our story begins, was the terminus of a railroad, and was the center of the Western cattle-trade. Although there were several churches in the city, and each one had a fair following, still sinfulness in its grosser forms was breathed on the very atmosphere of the place. Here the depraved human heart found its full vent, and character had sunk to a level almost beneath the reach of conscience and the restraint of true manhood.

As before stated, the saloon—the blackest stain on our American civilization—was there, accompanied by all its attendant vices, writing a black history, the enormity of which only eternity can reveal.

As usual in towns of some pretensions, there were castes in society. There were the low and depraved, given over to dissipation and shame; then the high (so called), composed of the wealthy and aristocratic; also the middle or industrial class, which is always the life of any commonwealth, and without which no town or municipality could long exist.

In this narrative we will endeavor to show how the two extremes of society meet, and how the excesses of the high class are but the echoes of the debaucheries of the lower class. We will have occasion later to lift the veil, and look more narrowly into the society of W——.

Z wandered aimlessly along the street, with a

feeling of pleasure in that he encountered scenes of civilization after so long wandering over the wild prairies. The sights seemed grand to him, and he enjoyed them very much. On turning a street corner, sweet strains of music fell upon his ear. He was passionately fond of music, and, as he had heard nothing of the kind for some time, he hastily passed up the street to find whence it came. A large, open door revealed an automatic piano as high as the ceiling of the room in which it stood. The piano was wound as clock-work, and set to playing music with a precision which exhibited wonderful mechanical skill. The melodies were quaint, but possessed a sweetness that fell like enchantment on the ear. Z stepped into the room, and stood in rapt admiration. He was lost to all his surroundings, when a hand was laid gently on his shoulder and a man spoke to him in a voice low and musical.

"You like music, do you?" said the man. "I enjoy it very much myself, and will show you something about this wonderful instrument."

So saying, he began to change the instrument, causing it to play other tunes, and explaining it all in a kindly manner. When the piano had been thoroughly discussed, the man turned to Z, and said in a very patronizing way:

"I think I have met you before, little man. Are you not the lad that was in the freight gang awhile ago? I heard the discussion at the livery barn, and afterward by inquiry learned some of your history, and find that your lot is far from being a pleasant

one. I think it is a burning shame that men should be so inhuman as those men have shown themselves toward you. I am sure I could hardly hold my temper when I heard of their conduct, and I came near giving them a piece of my mind. Right then and there I became your fast friend, and resolved to do my best to make your life more pleasant for you."

So saying, he placed an arm around Z, and said:

"Would you not take a glass of wine to strengthen you a little? You need it after such a long, tiresome journey as you have made."

Z drew himself away from the man and said firmly:

"No; I never drink any intoxicating liquor. It is wrong to do so, and it injures every one that uses it."

"That is right, my little hero; you have the true mettle in you, and will be a noble man some day. I won't insult you any more; but come, let us have a chat together, and it may be that I can help you in planning for the future."

He drew Z to the side of the room, and sat down with him on a long seat, where the boy had an opportunity to observe what was going on in the large, spacious saloon; for such it was, and Z had been unsuspectingly lured into it by the music. After talking for some time the man said to Z:

"I never take strong drink myself, but I am very fond of lemonade; will you not take a glass with me? I have some in the other room that I made myself, and I know it is good."

Z, like most boys, relished lemonade, and readily

consented to take a glass with the man who had spoken so kindly to him, thinking that surely he was his friend. The man filled two large glasses to the brim, and handed one to Z, who at once raised it to his lips; but, in raising the cup, he caught the odor of its contents, and recognized it as the odor of the poisonous drug that made such demons of the men he had lately been associated with. Quickly setting the glass down he exclaimed:

"There is strong drink in it. What do you mean by trying to deceive me in this way?"

"Bravo!" exclaimed the young man; "I was only trying your mettle. My sister wants to employ a nice boy that can't be easily deceived, and I think you will just suit the place. Come with me, and I will introduce you to my sister."

He then led the way up a long flight of stairs and into a large and beautifully adorned parlor, and, asking Z to take a seat, he left him, promising to return soon.

Z had never before beheld such costly furniture, such soft and velvety carpets, and such richly adorned windows and walls, and he was lost in admiration of the beauty before him. However, the young man soon returned with a richly dressed woman leaning on his arm, and introduced her to Z as his sister, Mrs. S. She looked smilingly at the boy for a moment. Then, covering her eyes with her handkerchief, she whimpered as she came near to him, and stood for a moment resting a hand on his shoulder. At last she said:

"You put me so much in mind of my own dear little boy that is dead, and I have been wanting some one to take his place; but none of the boys I have met before would do at all. However, when my brother told me about you, and the way you had been treated, I resolved to do something for you. Now, my little sweetheart, if you will stay with me I will dress you like a prince, give you good wages also, and you can live in this fine house with me, so you will know what it is to have a good time in this world."

As she said this she began to caress Z's curls, and smile as she looked into his dark-blue eyes.

Something about the woman's manner caused Z to shudder, and he drew himself proudly away from her, saying:

"I do not like to live so close to a saloon; there are so many bad people that come to it, and, besides, I should like to know what kind of work I am to do before I promise to take the place you offer."

"Ah, you are quite independent, I see," she said. "That is right. I think you will suit the place well. You will be expected to care for the tenpin alley most of the time and be general chore-boy. The work is delightful, and you can live like a prince."

"I thank you, ma'am," replied Z, "but I prefer not to do that kind of work. It is part of a saloon business, and it is all bad. So I bid you good-day."

With this remark he started to leave the room.

"Hold on!" cried the young man; "you are not

going to treat the kindness we have shown you with contempt, are you? Come, stop a while with us."

"Yes, yes," said the woman, feigning to cry. "You look so much like my own dear boy. You must stay with me a while. You will break my heart if you leave me without saying one kind word to me. Come and kiss me at least before you go."

Z hastily left the room, saying in a bewildered way:

"I must go. Good-day."

"Come and see me again," called the woman after him, with many endearing terms, until Z bounded down the stairs two steps at a time, and emerged into the thronged street below.

Once out upon the street, he saw that the day was far spent, and he directed his steps toward his uncle's home, a distance of about seven miles from the city. He was tired, and the journey seemed long and wearisome; but at last, after patient toil, he sighted his uncle's humble dwelling just as the glare of day gave way to the mellow twilight, and the oppressive heat to the balmy breezes of evening.

The sight of a home where peace reigned seemed to lend wings to his feet, and he ran as fast as he could until he stopped almost breathless before the humble cottage door. He was instantly greeted by his relatives, as they had seen his approach. The children were almost wild with joy, and his uncle greeted him with a kindly welcome, saying, "There is not a person on earth that I would be much more

pleased to see than you, my boy." His aunt gave him a kindly smile, but no words of welcome. However, it was for her that he reserved the unburdening of his mind.

After all the children had retired, and his uncle was taking his rest, Z sat talking with his aunt, telling her of his journey. He related only the incidents that he thought would interest her most, carefully omitting anything of an unpleasant nature. He knew her cares were many, and did not wish to burden her more; but he told her about his temptation to doubt the Christian religion, and of his deliverance from the thralldom of that temptation by breathing the name of Jesus in prayer. He told her, too, about the kind lady he met at the picnic and added:

"I believe it would have been easier for me to have doubted Christianity had not her kindness made me think of Jesus, who went about doing good. Somehow I knew she was a Christian and would befriend me if she could. I shall remember her kind words to me as long as I live, and I pray God to send more like her into the world to gladden the hearts of those who are lonely and sad."

Z had spoken cheerfully until that moment, and something in his voice caused his aunt to understand more of his real state of mind than he thought.

"My dear boy," she said, "I fear your lot is not a pleasant one, but circumstances are such with us that I do not know how it can be bettered at present. I think you can endure all with a stout heart until

such a time as the Lord will provide better things for you; but be assured that everything will be for your good if you fully trust in God."

"I could easily endure everything I have to encounter," answered Z, "if by doing so I could assist you in your battle for life; but I have received but little from Mr. Bleucher, and can not help as I so much desired."

At this he placed all the money he had left in her hand.

"Never mind about that, my boy," she said; "I am sorry that Mr. Bleucher could have it in his heart to do you an injustice, and it may be that he will yet pay you all he promised. Monroe and I are managing to get along fairly well, and we are looking for better things in the future. You must not worry about us. The Lord will provide."

"Yes," said Z, "but I can not bear to see you so heavily burdened; it is telling upon your health, and I notice that even little Nellie has a careworn look as if burdened beyond her years, and she is so young."

At the mention of Nellie's name Z felt the warm blood diffuse itself over his face, for her parting words to him that night came afresh to his mind. She had whispered: "Dear Z, I think you are one of the best boys that ever lived, and I love you next to my own dear brother."

Mrs. Bailey thought of the careworn expression which she saw on Z's face, and her heart ached as she remembered his tender years, and his young life

almost crushed by burdens too heavy for him. She noticed the tender pathos in his voice when he spoke of Nellie, and she wondered at his thoughtfulness for others.

"My dear boy," she said, "you are over-concerned about others to think of Nellie when your cares are so much greater than hers, and her years lack but two of being as many as your own."

"God save Nellie from the bitter experiences that some people have to encounter," said Z, warmly; "and may she never know how cruel and bad the world is. I have often thought that life without a hope of heaven would be unendurable, and I sometimes wonder what people are thinking about when they stay all their hopes on this world."

Z said this in a tone of voice that conveyed to his aunt a knowledge of more of his experience in life than he was willing that she should know.

"I am sorry, very sorry," she said, "that your childhood should be marred by these grave experiences; but I am sure that God will make them a great blessing to you if you put your trust in Him. I am truly thankful to God that the Tempter was not able to deceive you to-day, and that you did not taste the wine or the lemonade made in a saloon, and especially am I thankful that you did not accept the offer to serve the evil one, although the wages seemed very tempting. Remember, 'the wages of sin is death.' You must dismiss from your mind the cares of others, and be cheerful, remembering that God will order all things for good to them that

serve Him. Now, my boy, you must retire. You can go to see Monroe to-morrow, and in the evening you two can come home together. We will have a pleasant time on Sunday, as we will all be at home."

Z retired, and was soon in slumber. Mrs. Bailey sat for some time alone, thinking. The pathway of life was indeed hard. Her own scanty earnings, combined with that of her son, were scarcely adequate to keep the wolf from the door, and she knew, by the small amount that she had received from Z, that the boy had been robbed of his wages. In her heart there arose a bitter resentment toward the one who had wronged the boy so young and wholly at his mercy. At last, tired of thinking, she knelt by her window and poured forth the devotion of her heart to God, even praying for her enemies; then she arose with a calm, peaceful feeling in her heart, realizing that all was left to an all-wise God.

She visited the bedside of each of the children, and commended each one to God. She paused by the bedside of Nellie, and saw that her cares were forgotten in peaceful slumber, and her lips parted in a smile. She whispered: "God bless my Nellie. She does not know earth's great sorrows yet. My Lord, preserve her in her innocency, and may no dark cloud of sorrow blight her life!" She went cautiously to the bedside of Z. As the light fell upon his sun-tanned face she was startled to see how haggard and careworn it looked. Upon the face of the boy were traces of suffering too plain to be overlooked. She wondered why she had not before

observed how sunken were the cheeks, and how small and bony was the hand that now lay across his breast. The light falling across the face of the sleeper partially aroused him, and he said in a pleading tone:

"O please, Mr. Bleucher, I can go no further now; I am so tired, so tired."

Mrs. Bailey pressed a kiss on the blue-veined brow of the boy. He aroused, and said, smiling quickly:

"You up yet, Aunt! I thought you were taking your rest."

"You are not well," she replied. "Can I do anything for you?"

"O, I am quite well and comfortable," he said. "Please go now and take your much-needed rest."

She looked at him a moment, and smilingly bade him good-night.

## CHAPTER III.

# Z Relates His Past Year's Experience.

The next morning the family were stirring betimes, and every one seemed happy. Z very much enjoyed being with his relatives; but he knew his visit must be short, and this made him sober and thoughtful.

At the breakfast-table the younger children strove to sit as near as possible to Z, and he enjoyed it. However, tears would often come to his eyes, and he appeared to be striving to get the mastery of his feelings.

After breakfast he sat for some time amusing the children by telling them of his journeys, of the wild and desolate country over which he had traveled, of the many wild animals he had seen, and of anything he thought would interest them. He always omitted anything of an unpleasant nature, as he was careful for their happiness. After he had amused the children for a while they were sent out to play. All went but Nellie, who sat at Z's feet in order to hear everything he had to say to her father and mother.

Mrs. Bailey was sure that Z had omitted the unpleasant part of his narrative the evening before

because he did not wish to burden them with any of his trials. She came and laid her hand on his shoulder, and said:

"Now, Z, I want you to tell us all you have encountered while with the freighters, not leaving out one unpleasant feature of it, as I shall consider that you wrong us greatly by doing so. I now put you upon your honor, and if you do not tell us the whole truth I will consider you a deceiver."

"O Aunt," exclaimed Z, "please let us not say anything more in regard to me. I will probably go back on Monday to my employment, and it would seem wrong in me to offer a word of complaint about my employers. Besides, uncle wishes me to work for them, and I must not say a word about them that would seem unkind."

"You are mistaken there," exclaimed Mr. Bailey. "It would be very wrong of you not to tell me all about your present condition and how you are getting along."

Z looked at Nellie sitting at his feet, and caressed her sunny hair gently as he said:

"You had better go and play with the other children. You are too young to hear the sober subjects of older people." Nellie shook her head, and Z appealed to his aunt, saying: "Please send Nellie away; she is so young."

"I think my Nellie can stay," replied Mrs. Bailey, smiling. "She may feel sad at anything that has caused you sorrow, but it will certainly do her no harm. Now proceed with your story, and tell us

the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as the judge would say.'

"In order to do that, Aunt," said Z, "I would need a written record of all the events of the past eleven months, or at least a more accurate memory than I am in possession of; but I will do the best I can.

"Let me see; I think it was in the latter part of June of last year that we started from W—— with our first load of freight for Fort Sill. The weather was fine, and everything seemed so nice because I felt that I was earning a great deal, and I went along planning what I should do with my little fortune when I had made it. All passed pleasantly until dinner time, when I was much pained to see that no one gave thanks for his food, but all ate very much as pigs would do, without a thought of the Divine Hand that provides all our sustenance.

"Soon after dinner I heard one of the boys say, 'I tell you, fellows, we have a regular little saint along this time, and we will have great sport with him.'

"While we were preparing to start again Mr. Bleucher came to me and said, 'Now, my boy, we will have to give up our religion for the present, and go into business in good earnest.'

"I replied that I was willing to go into business as earnestly as he wished, but I did not see why we should give up our religion in order to do that. At this he flew into a rage and declared that if I presumed to advise him I might suffer the consequence

of my folly and bear the burden of trouble that I heaped upon my own shoulders. 'However,' he added, 'I am older than you are, and know best what to do.'

"At evening there was no Scripture read, and no prayers were offered, but the boys sat around the fire playing cards and telling unreasonable stories, many of them too shocking for the human ear.

"The second day out we crossed the State line into the Indian Territory, and my surprise was indeed great when I heard Mr. Bleucher using language as profane as any man in the crowd.

"In the evening, after all the chores were done, they gathered around the camp-fire with their cards and jugs of rum, and announced that they were going to have a high lonesome in honor of the fact that they were once more out of civilization.

"I was pained and shocked to see Mr. Bleucher take a hand at cards, and to notice that he drank as much rum as any man in the crowd.

"Various were the taunts and threats that they hurled at me, and I found it necessary to hide away in the grass to keep from them when they became intoxicated, as, I believe, every one did. It was about midnight when all became quiet, and I was enabled to creep away to bed.

"The next morning a young man informed me that they were ready to begin to knock all the religion I had out of me, as they had no use for either a young priest or a sanctimonious preacher of righteousness along with them, and the sooner I gave up all my pious ideas, the better for me.

"From that time on, many times they required extra work of me, such as carrying the wood and water for the entire camp, and often taunting me with such remarks as, 'Never mind, little saint, you have it hard enough here, but by and by you will go to heaven, and then you will have it fine enough there;' or, 'Come, Piety, arise in spiritual strength and lend a helping hand.' The entire trip was characterized by various scenes of lawlessness and debauchery, and such language as was used hourly I never thought it possible for the human tongue to utter.

"At times the older men were kind, and even the young men sometimes spoke kindly to me; but a greater part of the time they were trying something new to tease me. The extra labor they required of me was just for mere sport. They meant, as they said, to see what religion could do for one.

"When they became intoxicated there seemed to be nothing too bad for them to do, and many a time have I been obliged to hide for hours in order to save myself from being the victim of their rudeness.

"Once, I think it was during my second trip, when many of the men had been drinking quite freely, I was ordered out to hunt for the teams that had been turned out to graze and had strayed away. After having searched for about two hours, I returned to the camp and informed the men that I could not find the horses.

"A number of the boys then rushed at me, curs-

ing and swearing, and declaring that if I returned again without the horses they would not leave enough of me to say my prayers. I was able to escape them, and ran off across the prairie, determined not to return again without the horses if I had to remain on the prairie alone until morning. Soon I saw that I was hopelessly lost, about sixty miles from any settlement, and with no knowledge of the location of any human being.

"The howl of the wolves and the screech of the dog-owls made the night hideous to me. It seemed an age, but at last the day dawned, and a little before sunrise one of the young men came galloping over the prairie on horseback in search of me. The horses had been found, and in due time we resumed our journey.

"During the day there was very little said about my night's adventure, but I could see that many of them were somewhat ashamed of the part they had taken in the matter.

"I will attempt to relate but little of what has transpired during my stay with the freighters; but a few more incidents will suffice to give you an idea of the life of a freighter boy.

"We had made several trips, it usually requiring from a month to six weeks to make a round trip, when, one cold, stormy day, at noon, we arrived at the ford of the Cimarron River, and we were to attempt the crossing after dinner.

"In crossing these streams the freighters were obliged to double teams, or put two teams on one

wagon in order to pull the load through the quicksand. All agreed that it was necessary to take a thorough warming from their booze jugs, as the weather was quite cold and mush ice was floating in the rapidly flowing current of the river. Along the banks great platforms of ice hung to the shore and extended out into the current.

"Mr. Bleucher had been drinking a little more freely than usual that day, and was hardly accountable for what he did. He therefore declared that it was necessary for me to cut the ice away from the entrance of the ford, then wade across the river, and prepare the exit the same way. I asked him if I could not ride across, as the water was very cold.

" 'O, get along, you sniveling young apostle,' he replied, 'I 'll see if I can't cool off some of your warm religious sentiments.'

"At this the boys gave vent to loud shouts, and some cried one thing and some another. I heard one boy say: 'Hurrah for our prairie saint! We 'll have a specimen of old-time martyrdom yet.'

"I waded across, prepared the ford, and then returned. Mr. Bleucher said with a chuckle, 'Are you cooled off any?' and added, 'I 'll give you your choice between two things: you can throw your Testament into the river, and promise never to say your prayers again while in this crowd, or you can wade this river back and forth, and drive the lead teams for each one of the fifteen wagons.' "

"O, what a bad man!" exclaimed Nellie, who,

like the others, had been listening attentively to all that Z was saying.

Z stooped down and caressed the head that rested on his knee, and said, "Poor Mr. Bleucher had been drinking bad rum, and did not know what he was doing."

"Go on with your story," cried his uncle and aunt both at once, while their faces were bathed in tears.

"Well," said Z, "I told Mr. Bleucher that I would drive the lead teams.

"'Ha! you Justin Martyr, John Huss, Martin Luther, what 's-in-a-name!" he shouted in drunken accent; 'wade into it, then.'

"I waded the river back and forth until I could scarcely drag myself along. Several times I fell in the water, which, in places was waist deep for me, and quite swift. As I was driving the last team, and had fallen the third time, Jerome Harper, to whom the wagon belonged, struck me with his whip, and cut a long gash in my neck."

So saying, he showed to them a long scar on his neck made by the whiplash. He could go no further just then for the sobs of little Nellie, and Mr. and Mrs. Bailey almost wept aloud. Presently he said: "There, that is all past; let us say nothing more about it."

"No," cried Mrs. Bailey, "we must hear the rest."

"I did not go on with the teams in the morning," he continued; "we somehow got to a stage station

that night, but I can not remember how. When I awoke I was in a strange room and a strange man was sitting beside me. He told me that the train had gone on three days before; he also said that a Texas man had driven my team, and that the men had promised to take me back home with them when they returned."

"Why did you not write about this?" said Mrs. Bailey.

"Because," answered Z, "I did not want to trouble you, as I knew you had enough to bear; and, besides, I wanted so much to earn some money to help you."

"Well, let us hear the rest," said Mrs. Bailey.

"There is but little more to relate," replied Z. "They were detained nearly two weeks before they returned, although the distance was but about thirty-five miles. Storms and bad roads detained them. When they did return I was able to drive my team back home, but was not able to do much extra work, and the boys were more kind to me during the rest of that trip.

"Very little has occurred since then that would interest any one; only the same monotonous drives, the same camping episodes, and the same hard labor. However, I fear that I am becoming so used to hearing cursing and obscenity that I do not mind it as much as I did at first."

"Did they ever get drunk any more?" inquired Nellie, with great interest.

"O yes, little one," answered Z, "and that is why

they are always so poor. But by practice I became very successful in escaping them whenever I anticipated the results of too much rum. I could never think of tasting the poisonous stuff that injures so many poor men, and still they would endeavor to compel me to drink it whenever they became intoxicated themselves."

"I mean," said Nellie, "did they ever do anything more so unkind to you?"

A cloud passed over Z's face, but it was gone in a moment, and he answered:

"O, nothing worth speaking of."

Mrs. Bailey noticed the shadow, and said:

"Come, tell us what you were thinking about just then."

"I was thinking," he replied, "of something which occurred on our last trip but one; but I hardly think you would care to hear more."

"O yes," said Nellie, "let us by all means hear that."

"You promised to tell us all to the best of your ability," said Mrs. Bailey.

"Well, when we had but crossed the State line a rough-looking young man came riding up to the train on a pony, and asked the privilege of going through to the Cheyenne Agency with us. He was kind to every one, and especially to me. He never tired of talking to me and trying to show me how to manage my team, always stating that he was a teamster from away back.

"Everything went on as usual until we came to a

fine camping place, about forty-five miles from the State line and in the Indian Territory. The men had been drinking freely, and it was found that Mr. Bleucher's jug was entirely empty. There seemed to be a mystery about this, as it had been filled such a short time before, and only a limited quantity had been drawn out. The general supposition was that somebody had emptied the jug to waste its contents. Mr. Bleucher was furious with rage, and declared vengeance upon that somebody as soon as he was detected. Mr. Whitefield, the new man—who had also been drinking freely—came forward, and said:

"'I think I can inform you as to where the stuff went. There is a little man present who can tell you all about it.'

"With this remark, he nodded politely to me. Mr. Bleucher turned white with rage, and sprang to his feet, saying,

"'You Z, I 'll beat you within an inch of your life.'

"Mr. Whitefield stepped in between us and said firmly:

"'Not so fast, Mr. Bleucher; you will have me to walk over first.'

"The rest of the men loudly applauded Mr. Whitefield. Mr. Bleucher sat down on a camp-stool, and endeavored to smother his rage enough to remain calm.

"'Now,' said Mr. Whitefield, 'we will investigate this matter coolly, and see what is to be done.' Turning to me he continued, 'My boy, you may

confess the whole affair and fear no harm, for I will protect you.'

"I plainly told him that I knew nothing about it at all, and I did not think that they could frighten me into telling a falsehood. At this Mr. Whitefield waved his hand to Mr. Bleucher in order to command silence, and said to me, in a scornful way:

"'Ah, so you are so very truthful, are you? I suppose you did n't slip the jug out from under the seat and steal away with it? Then when I followed you to ask what you poured out the booze for, you did n't say you did it because it made a bad man out of Mr. Bleucher, and you wished to destroy it?'

"Here Mr. Bleucher sprang to his feet, and made a furious leap toward me, but Mr. Whitefield caught him by the coat collar and threw him to the ground.

"'Mr. Bleucher,' he cried, 'calm yourself and do nothing rash, or you will be sorry for it. The child will make amends for his conduct, and all can be settled in a peaceable manner.' Then he addressed me, saying, 'Now come, acknowledge your fault, and I will stand by you. But if you do n't confess I will turn you over to Mr. Bleucher, and let him deal with you as he sees fit.'

"I replied that as I had said before I knew nothing about it whatever. He turned to Mr. Bleucher and said:

"'It is evident that the lad does not mean to tell the truth, and he certainly deserves some form of punishment; but I think it far better that you do not lay hands upon him. If I were you I would dismiss

him from the train. It is but a short distance back to the State, and it would but serve him right to send him back. The trip alone would give him chance for reflection, and it would be a good lesson to him. I can drive the team on, as I have to make the trip anyway.'

"At this Mr. Bleucher arose, and shaking his fist at me said:

" 'Go, you lying vagabond, and this very night. Don't stop to parley with me.' Mr. Whitefield feigned a feeble protest, but Mr. Bleucher seemed determined, and he continued: 'Go along, I say, and if the Indians get you, then you will be with men of your own character.'

"I asked him for my wages, which he contemptuously refused to pay, saying that he would settle with my uncle, and added:

" 'If you say wages to me again, I will beat you until you will hardly have strength enough to drag yourself out of the camp.'

"I started (this being about ten o'clock of a very dark night) to find my way back to the settlement. I will not attempt to describe my feelings when I came to realize that I was alone on a dark night, in an Indian country, many miles from any human friend, and probably without food or shelter for some time. I feared that my strength would not hold out to carry me very far at a time without resting, for I was very tired.

"I think I must have walked about two miles when I became so tired that I felt I must have rest.

Therefore I crept into the prairie grass and lay down. I did not pray, I don't know why; somehow I believe I was like one in a dream. I soon fell asleep, and knew nothing more until I awoke, feeling that I was chilled through and through. When I could realize my situation, a sense of loneliness and misery crept over me, the description of which would be neither pleasant nor profitable. I dragged myself back into the road, which was near me, before attempting to rise. A gentle shower of rain had fallen, and my clothing was quite damp. I was more uncomfortable than before, but I saw that the moon had risen, and was shining through the shifting clouds. I was grateful for this, as I could see my way better.

"I resumed my journey. I had gone but a short distance when I saw lying in the road an ax, which I knew to belong to Mr. Bleucher. I do not know what came over me, but I felt real spiteful, and, taking the ax, I threw it into the grass, saying to myself, 'I do not think he will find his old ax now.' Then I felt very miserable, and there came to me the thought that I had greatly offended God, by forgetting that His Word said, 'Avenge not yourself.' Also the passage came to my mind, 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.'

"I knelt down in the road and prayed earnestly. The Lord forgave me, and my heart was strangely warmed. I resolved to follow the injunction of the Bible. I thought I could easily take that ax down

to the camp, and still get a good way on my journey back before daybreak.

"I took the ax, and went as fast as I could toward the camp. At first I thought of nothing but obeying God's Word, and I was quite happy until I came in sight of the camp. Then my courage almost failed me. I thought, 'What if Mr. Bleucher should see me, and not understand why I came back?' I knew from past experience that he would be unreasonable, and not believe what I said. I first thought I would leave the ax on the hill in the road, and then go away as quickly as possible. Then I thought that they would not be likely to come in search of the ax, for they had already given it up as lost. At this thought I was made to realize the folly of my spitework in first throwing the ax away, since it was as much lost to them, lying in the road as hidden in the grass. I did not venture to the camp for some time, but finally concluded that as the Lord desired me to restore the ax He would care for me in doing so. I stole as noiselessly as possible into the camp and stood the ax up by Mr. Bleucher's wagon-wheel, when I saw some one raise up on his elbow in bed, and was conscious that he was looking at me. My fright you can easily imagine. I ran with all my might up the hill and along the road, scarcely realizing what I was doing until I was almost out of breath. Gradually, however, I became more calm, and soon began to feel that there was no danger of pursuit. When I came to

the place where I had found the ax I fervently thanked God that I could then go on my way without a load of guilt to carry, and I was not unhappy during the remainder of that long night. I went on until the sun had risen, and then I sought a place to sleep in the prairie grass, as I was feeling quite warm and comfortable.

"I do not know how long I had slept, but not very long, when I was awakened by the howl of a wolf quite near me. I sprang to my feet, and looked around me. I had traveled several miles during the night, and felt a sense of comfort in the thought that I was nearing civilization. I walked on until the middle of the forenoon, when in the distance behind me I saw a man on a pony, approaching in a swinging gallop. Some distance behind him was another coming, not quite so rapidly as the first. I thought, of course, that they were Indians, and ran for a short distance; but I knew that I was seen by them and could not hide from them, for they would overtake me soon. I resolved to take the consequence of being captured by them as coolly as possible.

"Again I thought it probable that they were friendly Indians, and that I would receive no harm from them. I confess, however, that the scene of a lonely grave in the trail, with which I was familiar, came up vividly before me. In fancy I heard afresh the story of the man who was tied to his wagon-wheel and burned by the Indians. These

words of the inscription on the slab placed at the head of the grave played before my eyes:

"'Grave of P. Hennessey,
killed by the indians,
July 3, 1874.'

"Then I would laugh at my fears, and walk on as calmly as I could.

"Meanwhile the horsemen came nearer and nearer. As I reached the summit of the hill and glanced back at my pursuers, I recognized George Whitefield as the man in the lead. My fright in consequence of this you can imagine. Being where I could pass down hill out of sight I ran as fast as I could into the broad valley beyond. I did not stop until I could see Mr. Whitefield nearing me at a full gallop, swinging his hat in his hand. I could not imagine what my destiny would be when once he had me in his power, but I was conscious of not having done him a wrong. I slackened my speed, and walked along the road, never looking backward. I could hear him shouting, but could not distinguish his words.

"Presently he rode up beside me, and springing from his horse caught me in his arms exclaiming, 'O, you poor, wronged child, what can I do to atone for the evil I have done you?' Then he told me how he had destroyed the rum himself, after he had become intoxicated, and told that falsehood in order

to get my place as teamster for the trip. He also said that after he began to sober a little, he had become restless and was contemplating going in search of me, when he saw me come into the camp, and thought, of course, that I had but hidden for the time and would be with them in the morning.

"As he arose to watch me, he said I seemed to him to vanish like a vapor, and he had lain until morning, hardly daring to stir as he thought he had certainly seen an apparition. He told me also that in the morning, when the ax was found, and they were wondering where it came from, he confessed his fault and assured them of my innocence, telling them also how I mysteriously appeared with the ax and vanished. At this Mr. Bleucher exclaimed, 'That 's just like that boy; he has found the ax, returned it, and then gone away again. I believe he would do every possible kindness to the worst enemy he had. I will go and bring him back if we do n't make the trip in all summer.'

"'I came with him,' continued Mr. Whitefield, 'and my pony outran his mule. Now that I have found you, what can I do to make amends for the wrong I have done?'

"I told him that he was under no obligation to me, but I wished him to promise never to take another drop of intoxicating liquor as long as he lived. He promised, and has since kept his word. Mr. Bleucher came up to us, and, for the first time I ever heard him, confessed his wrong and promised me better treatment for the future. He also said

that he and Mr. Whitefield would buy a nice little pony when they got to the Agency, and give it to me, besides my wages.

"I was not able to do many chores for some time after that, and, in fact, have never felt well since; but they were more kind to me during the rest of that trip. Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Bleucher bought a pretty pony for me; but when we got back to the State a man offered Mr. Bleucher a good price for it, and he sold it.

"The last trip was not so hard for me, as Mr. Patterson, a very kind old gentleman, joined his train with ours. He did not drink rum himself, and would not allow the men to trouble me when they were intoxicated. To be sure they teased me a great deal about religion, but they were otherwise kind."

When Z had finished this narrative, Mr. Bailey laid his hand on the boy's head and said: "My boy, you have suffered much in order to do me a favor, as you thought; but you will do me a wrong whenever you cause yourself sorrow. You shall go no more with those wicked men."

## CHAPTER IV.

# A Holy Sabbath.

After Z had related his experience, as recorded in the preceding chapter, he went to the farm where Monroe was employed, in order to return with him in the evening. The day had been one of the happiest that Z had experienced for many months. It seemed so delightful to be walking once more with some one whom he loved.

The mellow sunset was so beautiful, and the songs of the birds so musical to him, as he was in a more peaceful presence than he had known for many days. How pleasant were the hours which he spent in company with those humble Christians! By the remembrance of those peaceful hours he was aided in battling with temptations which he met in the trials of life.

The evening passed joyously for the children; and the morning dawned clear and bright. Z's heart was full of joy as they drove to church and Sunday-school. It was a very pleasant June morning, and all nature smiled with the presence and love of God. Everything seemed to be so happy that Z sat thinking of heaven. He remained silent and thoughtful all the way. When they came in

sight of the house of worship, his eyes filled with tears, and he offered an earnest prayer of thanksgiving for the privilege of returning to the house of God and meeting with a worshiping people. Z thought he never before had seen so many kind people. Surely he was warmly welcomed, if we may judge from the many hearty handshakes and the many God-bless-you's that were showered upon him.

His old Sabbath-school teacher still occupied his place over the class of boys, and none gave Z a more hearty welcome than he. The boys were all happy to welcome their old friend, and made a great deal of noise and stir in striving to get near him, for which they went unrebuked. Even the men and women turned in their seats to see the boy, and many a handkerchief was carried to the eyes of those honest worshipers as they saw him sitting there looking so frail and careworn, but still holding in his hand the same little red Testament with which he had worshiped in days gone by. Sitting in the pew which he then had occupied, his lips moved in prayer and a transport of praise filled his soul, causing his cheeks to color slightly.

The worshipers remembered the rosy-cheeked, cheerful boy that had worshiped with them but a short year before, and the change in his appearance caused many an honest tear to flow. The same superintendent as before stood smiling from behind the sacred desk, and everything was the same as far as Z could see. Yet what a marked change had

taken place somewhere, in some unaccountable manner! From this haven of joy and praise Z had imagined the great world as overflowing with thanksgiving and happiness.

Although the same peace reigned in the very atmosphere of the place, he now knew that this was far from representing the world outside. He saw this place as but an oasis of peace in a desert of sin and corruption. He had left these scenes a happy but inexperienced boy. He had returned with the weight of many sad experiences, and a knowledge of the condition of mankind without an accepted Savior. He saw how dark this world would be without "the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" and he fervently thanked God for having sent His Son into the world to redeem fallen man.

Z was busy with these thoughts during the opening exercises of the Sabbath-school, and almost unconscious of time until the superintendent announced that, as they were favored by the presence of one (though young) whom they all believed to be a bold soldier for Jesus, they would ask him to lead in the devotions. Continuing in a solemn voice he said, "We will be led in prayer by —— ——." At the mention of his name Z clung to the arm of his cousin Monroe, the room seemed to whirl around him, and for a moment a mist came before his eyes.

All the past came vividly before him; how he had been obliged to hide away, and present his petitions to God where no human ear could hear and no

human eye could see; but he was again in the house of prayer, where he had many times before prayed, not too mindful of the Divine presence in the sanctuary. He realized the sanctity of God's house as never before, and to be expected to lead in the devotions made him feel unequal to the task. But O, the holy calm that came into his soul at that moment, drawing him into a sacred nearness with his Redeemer, until he seemed to be alone with his God! The still small voice whispered, *"Fear not, I am with thee."*

All the rest of the worshipers were on their knees by this time, and he, kneeling down, poured forth the gratitude of his heart to God. He fervently thanked God for the Bible, for the gift of His Son to redeem the world, for houses of worship, and for Christian homes and friends. Many were the hearty amen's when he so earnestly petitioned a Throne of Grace for a knowledge of Jesus to be sent to the unsaved, and for willing minds to carry the Gospel into the dark places of earth that they might shine with His glory. He closed his prayer with an earnest appeal to God for His care of the innocent ones suffering from the cruel hand of the sin-blinded followers of the Evil One. When he arose from his knees, there was scarcely a dry eye in the house. The words of the prayer had been simple, even child-like; but it was a petition from the heart, and it reached the heart.

From this on, Z was extremely happy. He joined in the singing with fervor, and when they sung,

"My heavenly home is bright and fair," by faith he saw the glittering towers and heard the songs of the ransomed on the other shore.

The lesson was an interesting one, and all entered into the study of it with earnestness. Following the Sabbath-school was a sermon by the pastor; and Z joined in all the services with a zest that inspired every one; therefore, at the close they all agreed that it had been the best meeting of the season.

The drive home and the pleasant evening spent with dear friends seemed to Z too good to be real; but everything earthly must have an end, and so that Sabbath day, with all its joys, soon passed away.

## CHAPTER V.

# Seeking Employment.

In the early dawn of the following morning, Z started for W——, first to inform Mr. Bleucher that his intention was to seek another situation, and, after receiving his wages, to seek some employment better suited to him. The morning air was sweet with the perfume of flowers; and the music of birds, just waking from their sleep, lent enchantment to the scene. Z was light-hearted enough at the thought that he was at last free from the irksome employment which had made his life miserable. Hope, fresh and young as the morning, lent wings to his feet as he hurried along, singing as gayly as the lark.

He held tightly in his hand a written order asking Mr. Bleucher to pay to the bearer all the wages then due him. The order was drawn up in due form, and signed by his uncle. He sped on a little faster than before as he glanced again at the sum represented in the order, and thought of it as all his own earnings. "A handsome little fortune," he said to himself, "and all my own to spend as I like. God help me to spend it aright."

"A handsome little fortune," and yet it was the price of so much suffering, the wages of so many heartaches. Ah! well for us that a record is kept which can not be tarnished by mortal hand, a record that shall be just in every way, and which demands accurate adjustment.

He soon passed over the seven miles, and by the time the men were stirring at the barn he was there; his cheeks were all aglow from the active exercise, and his eyes sparkled with anticipation. After the usual morning greeting, he approached Mr. Bleucher and handed him the order, with an explanatory note written by Mrs. Bailey. Mr. Bleucher studied them intently for some time and his face turned pale with rage as he exclaimed: "You young hypocrite, to deceive me in this manner and then come after wages. I have a mind to horsewhip you on the spot."

"I do not fear you in the least," replied Z, calmly. "I am sure that I do you no wrong. I have only asked for what is my just due, and as to being a hypocrite, the Lord must judge us both, and not we each other."

Mr. Bleucher was abashed for a moment at the quiet manner in which Z spoke. But he replied scornfully:

"So that is the way you show your Christianity, by breaking faith with your friends? Is that the way your class-leader teaches you the Bible? As to that uncle of yours, the Church is cursed indeed which has his name on its records."

Z felt keenly the sting of the last remark, and the blood mantled his brow as he replied:

"Mr. Bleucher, my uncle's Christian conduct is above reproach, as you very well know; and that is far more than your best friends can say of you. I have not lived with you for the past year to be wholly blind to the defects of your character, and I know very well that you are now condemning another in order to get the consent of your conscience to do what you know is not right."

Three rousing cheers, coming from the crowd that had gathered during this conversation, told Mr. Bleucher plainly that the boy had the advantage of him in the favor of the people. His conscience also told him that the boy spoke the truth, and this picture of himself was not altogether pleasing to him. He stood for a moment, eying the boy as if to abash him with his gaze, and then hissed between his teeth:

"So I am a deep, dyed-in-the-wool hypocrite, am I, you sanctimonious young sapling?"

"I said nothing of the kind," replied Z, quickly, "and I would not judge you in the least. You must stand acquitted or condemned at the bar of your own conscience. However, this conversation will not make either of us any happier, and as we are to part company from to-day, we had better part as friends. So pay me that which is due me, and I will trouble you no further."

"You have quite made up your mind to desert me, have you, and will nothing induce you to change

that conclusion?" said Mr. Bleucher, adding many promises of kindness and rewards that were in store for the boy if he would but go one more trip. Z replied to all this that he had fully determined to seek other employment, as the life of a freighter was distasteful to him.

Mr. Bleucher, seeing that he could not persuade the boy to go with him any more, became very angry and said:

"You deserve to be thoroughly horsewhipped for breaking faith in this way. As a punishment I shall not pay one cent more than what you have already received. Go along, now, and find employment better suited to your pious nature."

Mr. Bleucher's manner told Z only too plainly that he meant what he said, and he could expect nothing more from him. He felt a lump rising in his throat as he saw the air-castle which he had so lately builded thus hurled to the ground. However, with some effort he got the mastery of himself sufficiently to say firmly:

"Mr. Bleucher, if you think you can live more happily with what is mine, taken from me in this manner, I assure you I can live without it."

At this he walked proudly away, leaving Mr. Bleucher to his own reflections. He walked proudly enough until he was some distance from the livery barn, and then ran rapidly along the road to hide the tears that were gathering in his eyes. He finally sat down beside a deserted building and gave way to weeping. He heard the merry shouts of boys

and girls of his own age who were at play in the city streets. Their merriment seemed to mock the throbs of his sorrow-stricken heart.

For some time he sat brooding over his own loneliness and misery; and can we altogether blame him? Dear reader, have you not, even under less discouraging circumstances, almost yielded to despair?

Finally a passage from the Bible came to his mind, and he seemed to hear the precious promise: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." He uttered a prayer to God for guidance, and arose to face the cold world. He knew that a struggle against great disadvantages was before him, but he did not falter. A firm faith in God filled his soul, and a firm purpose shone from his eyes. The darkness of all doubt was dispelled from his mind. However, he realized that action was necessary, and he proposed to meet all obstacles manfully, and to fear nothing but sin. He hurried on down the street, and soon passed the place where he had been offered good wages for working in the tenpin alley. His lip curled with scorn as he thought of the degradation accompanying such an employment, and he moved hastily on. He soon stopped at a drygoods store, and meekly asked for work.

"Recommend, please," replied the proprietor. "Let 's see your recommend."

Z modestly replied that he had no recommendation, but wished to be taken on trial.

"Good-day," replied the man; "I've no time to waste on the likes of you."

Z moved on, nothing daunted by this, as he had expected to meet with just such rebuffs. He determined to be courageous whatever he might encounter.

During the entire forenoon, and until the middle of the afternoon, he met with no success. One found him too young to suit the place, another objected to his lack of experience, and still another thought him too sparely built to be strong enough for work. In fact, the whole catalogue of objections common in such cases was rehearsed in his ears, until he almost became disheartened. He was very tired and hungry, having tasted no food since the night before; for he had depended on the money he expected to receive from Mr. Bleucher, and had not anticipated coming to want so soon. Still he went on and on, determined not to return to his uncle's house until he had found employment.

About mid-afternoon he stepped into an auctioneer's hall, and made his usual inquiry for work. A tall man, wearing gold-bowed spectacles, came to the counter where he stood, and eyed him critically for a moment; then took him by his shoulder, and turned him around, saying, "Why, yes, you would make a fine auctioneer. Your size and build are almost perfection. Even now any one would take you to be Old Four-Eyes himself." Here he laughed heartily at his own joke.

Old Four-Eyes was the name commonly applied

to the auctioneer, and he seemed very proud of it. He continued to shake Z by the shoulder as he said: "Come back this evening at eight o'clock, and if you prove equal to the task I have for you, I will pay you handsomely for your services." With this remark he walked away chuckling, and saying to himself, "Ha, ha! another Old Four-Eyes for the town of W——."

Z thanked the auctioneer, and left the hall with a feeling of hope mingled with doubtful apprehension; for there was that in the manner of the man which caused him to doubt his sincerity. However, there was nothing left but to wait and see what was in store for him.

He was puzzled to know how to spend the long hours while he waited. He therefore strolled out of the streets into a road which led to the river. On reaching its banks he sat down and amused himself for awhile by throwing sticks into the rapidly flowing current and watching them float away.

When he could endure his hunger no longer, he sought some wild artichokes, which grew on the river banks, and ate them with a relish. He then slept beneath a small shade-tree. In his dreams he passed through a perfect labyrinth of triumphs and defeats. Success was quickly followed by failure, and disappointment was in turn chased away by hopes revived.

He awoke to find that the sun was nearly down, and he would therefore have but a short time to wait in order to meet the auctioneer at eight o'clock.

Nevertheless the moments dragged wearily with him while he waited.

Promptly at the appointed time he stepped into the auctioneer's hall, to find it filled with a noisy, jostling crowd. The auctioneer was standing on the counter crying off articles of merchandise with an eagerness that caused the perspiration to drip from his chin.

Z waited until he had made the sale, then approached him and said: "Did you not appoint this hour to speak with me about entering into your service?"

The auctinoeer adjusted his spectacles and said with a hearty laugh: "Why, little one, I thought you knew I was but joking with you. I could have no earthly use for you, unless it was to set you up in the show window as an advertisement for a charity school."

So saying he made a gesture toward the boy and addressed the giggling crowd as follows: "Fellow citizens, behold the coming man of our city in the spectacle before you. Behold ye an undeveloped second Old Four-Eyes;" and he was almost convulsed with laughter at his own witticism.

A loud burst of laughter arose from the crowd, but it died away in a moment; for Z gave a stifled moan, and clutched the edge of the counter to keep from falling. So keen had been the shock of disappointment that he scarcely had strength enough left to endure it. A deathlike pallor overspread his face. He looked pleadingly into the eyes of the

auctioneer, and tried to speak, but he seemed unable to utter a word. Only a moment he gazed into the face of the auctioneer, and then quickly left the room. Before the wondering crowd had time to collect their thoughts he was lost to them in the darkening twilight.

"A queer case that," said the auctioneer, sheepishly. "I heartily wish, boys, I had not played that trick; but how was I to know that it would be so severe on the hapless little urchin?"

"Poor child," said a kind-hearted German who was in the crowd, "his face shows signs of sorrow too great for his years. Does any one present know anything about him?"

"Pooh!" exclaimed a bystander, "he's nothing but a common street Arab, and I guess he will get over that little tilt all right. You, Henry Bolte, sympathize with this low trash entirely too much. Why, they haven't mind enough, any of them, to appreciate a kindness when bestowed upon them."

"Did you ever suffer from ingratitude toward you on their part, James Hugh Brass?" asked Mr. Bolte, a trifle sarcastically.

At this the crowd laughed heartily, and Mr. Bolte started homeward, resolving to assist the lonely child if opportunity offered.

Z after leaving the auctioneer's hall ran down the street for some distance, and then, turning into an alley out of sight, he stopped and gave way to weeping. Presently he calmed himself, and thought of his lonely condition. Yet he would not return to

his uncle's without employment, as he had resolved not to be a burden to any one. He said to himself: "I will still continue to seek employment, and if I die in an attempt to find a way to make an honest living, I believe all will be well with me. I will trust in God, and I believe He will lead me; therefore I am content."

He came back upon the street, and, going in a northerly direction, passed out of the city upon the highway, and soon arrived at the county fair ground. There he concluded to rest awhile under one of the many sheds. He soon found a suitable grass plot, and lay down to think what was best to do. Soon his thoughts seemed far away, and, before he knew it, sweet, refreshing sleep claimed his weary form for repose.

Let us look at the picture for a moment. Only a child form, thinly and very plainly clad, resting on the cold earth. Only one poor, struggling human being, crowded out from the comforts of life by the world's mad rush for gain. Yet the Heavenly Father's own green, velvety earth-bed gave repose to the weary frame. The free winds of heaven fanned the fevered brow of the sleeper, and mingled the green, waving grasses with the golden curls, as they chased each other over the pale face and neck.

Think you the Holy Child of Bethlehem passed by this scene unobserving? Was it not His whisper of peace in the ear of the sleeper that caused the pale lips to wreath in smiles?

O, such a peaceful sleep! A repose for weary

mind and body, with a conscience void of offense toward God and man, with the greensward for a downy pillow, the free winds of heaven for a coverlet, and seraphic wings hovering in hushed vigils over the slumberer. Well might the millionaire on his couch of luxury, tossing under the weight of a remorseful conscience, covet such repose as this.

All unconscious the sleeper lay until the rosy fingers of dawn pushed the curtains of night, and all the landscape sparkled with the dews of a newborn day.

When he arose he looked around him in a bewildered way, unable to understand where he was. He could scarcely believe that he had slept through the night. It seemed such a short time since he had lain down to rest; but O, how refreshed he was, and how thankful for nature's sweet repose! He sat on the grass for some time in meditation. When he started again to the river, the sun had risen and was smiling on a mellow June morning.

He knew that people would not be stirring for some time, therefore there was plenty of time to amuse himself by the river side before resuming his irksome task of seeking employment.

With the first stir of the people Z began, with face flushed with anxiety, to ask each and every one he met if he knew of a situation where he might earn a living. He met at last a kindly-appearing gentleman, who told him of a farmer living about five miles from the city, who, he was certain, wanted a boy to assist him. "However," the gentleman

added, "do you think you can make that distance all right in your present state of health?" Z replied cheerily that he could easily do that, as he was used to walking, and thought that a very short distance. Receiving directions from the gentleman, he started immediately for the farm. Being too fatigued he was able to make but slow progress, and it was nearly noon when he arrived at the home he sought.

He was met at the door by the busy housewife, who came from the kitchen in answer to his call. When she saw the child in the doorway she frowned upon him and said in a vexed tone, "Well, what do you want?" Z told her his errand in a confused manner, for her conduct had embarrassed him. She answered, "My husband brought home a boy last night, and I hardly think he could want another; so I guess you need not wait to see him."

The odor of food being prepared for the dinner came from the kitchen, and the boy was very hungry; therefore, he hesitated, and thought he would ask the lady for something to eat; but she spoke in an impatient manner, "Why don't you go on? I have no time to stand here."

Z started back to the city, feeling that his strength would not hold out much longer, but thankful that he had not begged food of the lady whose house he had just left. He mustered up all the strength he could command, and walked along the road toward W——.

He had gone but about a half mile when he saw a man coming up behind him in a carriage drawn

by a fine horse. His first impulse was to leave the road, as he did not care to see any one just then. But he said to himself, "This man will take no notice of me;" so he drew his hat down over his eyes and trudged along. Soon the carriage came up beside him, and a cheery voice called, "Good morning, little man; if you are going to town you may ride with me." Z looked up with surprise into the kind, honest face of Henry Bolte smiling from the carriage.

We need not linger to describe that drive back to the city. Mr. Bolte had gone out that morning on a hunting trip, and had taken his lunch with him; but as he had met with no success he was returning sooner than he had expected. The exhausted look of the boy as he seated himself in the carriage caused Mr. Bolte to understand that the child was in need of food. He therefore opened his lunch basket, and put it into the boy's lap, saying, "Help yourself; then we can talk after lunch is over."

During that ride Z told Mr. Bolte of his past life and present condition. As he closed, tears were glistening in the eyes of the kind-hearted young German, and he pressed a kiss on the wasted cheek of the child, saying, "I have a plan for you and me in the future."

## CHAPTER VI.

# Lending a Helping Hand.

We will lift the curtain on a scene somewhat different from the one in the preceding chapter. Summer had passed away, and the approach of winter was discernible. A November twilight was deepening into the shades of night. All day long dark clouds had hovered along the northwestern horizon, adding leaden tints to the dull gray sky. The wind was whistling around the corners of each building with a dismal moan.

Z was standing by the window of a drygoods store, looking out upon the almost deserted streets. Although the weather had been inclement, the streets had been thronged all day. The clerks had been kept very busy, and were very tired, but at the approach of night the streets and stores had been deserted.

We could scarcely recognize our friend Z in the rosy-cheeked, smiling boy that stood on that occasion looking out at the window. A great change had been wrought in the boy. It seemed that the course of nature had been reversed in his life, and a summer sunshine had lighted upon his pathway. A great change, thought Z, as he looked out upon

the dreary street. He had been the busiest of all the busy clerks in that large establishment throughout the entire day, and the quiet that reigned in store and street brought to him a restful calm. He stood musing over the events of the past season. He thought of his lonely condition when found by Mr. Bolte, and remembered, with sincere gratitude, how Mr. Bolte had received him into his furniture store and had taught him the arts of trade.

He had also attended the church and Sunday-school of his choice, and found in his new pastor, Rev. J. T. Hargood, a good spiritual adviser. He had spent many a pleasant evening with the pastor and his family. He was probably most pleased when he found that Mrs. Sails, whom he met at the picnic, was his Sunday-school teacher.

The summer months had passed so pleasantly that he could scarcely believe that all was real. His chief delight had been to please Mr. Bolte, whom he believed to be the best man in the world; and this he frequently told to his aunt in very glowing terms. Mr. Bolte had also become very much attached to the boy, and never tired of teaching him anything which he thought would be useful to him in after life.

Mr. Bolte often said to his friends: "I don't know how I could get along without my helpful little friend, and I wonder how I ever came to run business in the soulless way I have for so long a time."

Z had formed an acquaintance with most of the

boys of his Sunday-school class; but one of them, Charles Fulton by name, the son of a grocer in W——, shared a greater portion of his affections. On comparing dates the boys found that there was but one day's difference in their ages, and a Jonathan and David love sprang up between them.

A splendid pastor, a kind Sunday-school superintendent, a superior Sunday-school teacher, many new-found friends, and, above all, the best of employers, had made the summer pass for Z as one blissful dream.

One dark shadow had clouded the sunshine of this happy season. Just as the autumn leaves began to fall, all that was mortal of Mr. Bailey was laid beneath the sod of a country churchyard. He had slept the calm sleep of the *"dead which die in the Lord,"* to awaken no more to earth's sorrows, but on the shores of eternal splendor to enjoy the presence of the Savior whom he had trusted and loved while he lived on earth. The dark cloud of sorrow which overshadowed the humble Christian home of the departed was silver-lined with precious promises from God's Word. The widow and orphans, putting their trust in the Lord, started out anew to battle with the trials of life.

Mr. Bolte had found Z so helpful that he could afford to pay him good wages, and with these the boy was able to assist his aunt very much. Monroe had also been employed at a neighboring farm all summer, so none of them had come to want. Soon after Mr. Bailey's death, Monroe was thrown out

of employment by the ceasing of the farm-work. A rather gloomy prospect presented itself to the widow at the approach of winter; but Z was on the lookout in order to help, if possible.

When he saw an advertisement in a local paper asking for a boy to help in the largest drygoods store in the city, he got leave of absence from his employer, and went to the home of his relatives, presenting brilliant prospects for Monroe. He pictured to them in glowing terms the possibility of a future for his cousin. "Never fear," he said to his aunt, "I will introduce Monroe to Mr. Coupland, whom I know, and he can see at a glance that I have brought him just the boy he wants." Mrs. Bailey became hopeful that her son might secure the place, and sent him away with a benediction of love and best wishes.

The boys were not long in walking the seven miles back to the city, and they soon stood before Mr. Coupland, their faces all aglow with active exercise. Mr. Coupland was a hard-hearted, greedy merchant, who only looked at a proposition from a standpoint of personal gain. Z had met him several times, but had always been uneasy in his presence.

This time he unhesitatingly introduced his cousin, and told, in his artless way, about his aunt's needy condition. He closed by saying, "Now, Mr. Coupland, I am sure that my cousin is just the boy you need."

Mr. Coupland had been eying the boys coldly, without saying a word, but as Z ceased speaking

he answered gruffly: "No, sir, I can't think of taking a boy into my service who is wholly inexperienced in the arts of trade. However," he added, almost in a whisper to Z, "perhaps you can induce Mr. Bolte to receive your cousin, and that would give you liberty to accept the place here which I will give you."

Mr. Coupland had for some time envied Mr. Bolte his helpful little clerk, and here he saw his chance. To be sure, he had contemptuously driven the boy from his store when he first came to W—— seeking a situation; but now, as the boy had been proved, it was quite another matter. He could not see why he should not profit by the experience of Mr. Bolte, even if it had cost him no pains or risk.

Z looked into the eyes of the cold-hearted man, and when he thought of leaving his kind employer to work for this man, a fierce refusal welled up in his heart. He was on the point of saying "No," firmly, when he saw his cousin standing by the door looking so disheartened. Monroe had not heard this conversation, and was contemplating his mother's disappointment when he returned without having obtained the situation. Tears gathered in Z's eyes; but he thanked Mr. Coupland, and promising to return soon, he took Monroe by the arm and led him from the store.

Mr. Coupland stood watching the boys with a gleam of satisfaction in his eyes. He knew very well that Z had sacrificed much, and to leave his generous employer would cause him much grief, but

what was that to him? "His self-sacrificing spirit," said Mr. Coupland to himself, "makes him just the boy for my business;" and he repeated over and over again, "The boy will do. He will certainly do." And thus he congratulated himself on his own shrewdness.

The boys were soon at the furniture store, and Z, still clutching Monroe's arm, stopped in front of the show-window to view the objects there which were so familiar to him. There were the various articles of furniture which he had dusted and polished so light-heartedly a short time before, but these sights must all pass from him like a happy dream. Above all, he was to lose the cheer of the smiling face and kind words of his dear employer, the man whom he loved the best of all men. Tears flowed freely at these reflections, and it was with difficulty that he got the mastery of his feelings. However, he soon controlled himself, and led Monroe into the presence of Mr. Bolte.

The latter was acquainted with Monroe, as the boy had called several times to see Z. He therefore addressed the boys cheerily, and bade them be seated. Z at once told Mr. Bolte of Mr. Coupland's offer, and of his conclusion to accept it for Monroe's sake, to the utter astonishment of the latter, who, before this, had not the slightest idea that his cousin contemplated giving to him the situation with Mr. Bolte. Monroe said firmly, "No, Z, I will not rob you of your excellent place." But Z put forth the

needs of Monroe's mother and helpless children so earnestly that the boy consented.

Mr. Bolte placed a hand on Z's head, and looked him fondly in the eyes as he said: "My dear boy, have you grown tired of the companionship of Henry Bolte, and do you wish to seek more congenial associations?"

Z sprang to his feet, and, throwing his arms around Mr. Bolte's neck, exclaimed: "O, Mr. Bolte, I love you better than any other man living, and would like to stay with you always, but I wish to help my dear relatives. I am sure that my cousin will be of more service to you than I could ever hope to be. I will come to see you often, and you will soon see that I am but trying to do right." So saying he clasped the hand of Monroe, and placed it into the hand of Mr. Bolte; then he went some distance away from the two, and, sitting down on the sofa, covered his face with his hands. Mr. Bolte understood that Z craved for his cousin the place he had occupied both in employment and affections.

Mr. Bolte stood clasping Monroe's hand for some time, and then the two went to Z as he sat still with his face hidden in his hands. They understood the struggle that the generous boy was having with his feelings, and their eyes were filled with tears. Mr. Bolte broke the silence by saying huskiiy: "When will you go, my boy? I will employ your cousin, and we will love each other for your sake."

Z arose from the sofa, smiling through his tears

as he answered: "I will go now, and Monroe can commence his duties here to-night."

Mr. Bolte placed his arm around the boy, embracing him fondly as he said, smiling: "Go, my noble boy. Be the best clerk in Mr. Coupland's establishment, and the blessings of God be with you. Come and see us often, because we want always to know how you are getting along. It will be my chief joy to know that you are prosperous and happy; but, my dear little friend, may you cherish ever that self-sacrificing spirit which will endear you to all whom you meet."

Monroe could only express his gratitude in a fond embrace and tears of joy.

Mr. Bolte now began to show his new clerk about the store and the business he was to assist in. Z went down the street, feeling very lonely, but thankful to God that he had been able to assist in making others happy.

Mr. Coupland met Z with a hearty handshake, and a gleam of satisfaction, rather than a smile, overspread his face. The boy went to work at once to learn all he could about the new place he had undertaken to fill, and his desire to please Mr. Coupland for Mr. Bolte's sake made him so devoted to his duty that the highest expectations of the drygoods merchant were fully realized.

Z had been with Mr. Coupland about a week when he heard the latter say that they were obliged to seek another seamstress to make the garments for which they had such a demand in their trade.

The boy begged Mr. Coupland to give his aunt a chance to do the work, and, receiving permission, he wrote a letter to her, telling her to call at the store and get some goods to make up on trial. When Mrs. Bailey received the letter she thanked God fervently for sending her such a helper in time of need. She said: "That dear boy has sacrificed much for our sakes; but he must save his earnings for himself now, as we can get along nicely with what we have."

Mrs. Bailey was given the work to do, and soon Mr. Coupland said in a satisfied manner, "We have gained much by hiring our new seamstress."

Three weeks had passed since Z came to Mr. Coupland's. He had found his new employer very exacting, and seemingly never satisfied with what one could do; yet he was kind in his way, and granted the child more favors than any other clerk in the establishment. The store was large, and employed a number of clerks; among them was James Hugh Brass, whom we first met at the auctioneer's hall.

At the time our chapter opens Z was standing by the window looking out into the deepening gloom. All day long frost had floated in the whirling wind, and as the night came on, snow began to fall and was driven around the corners of the building in gustful flurries, blinding the few belated stragglers hurrying along the streets.

A loud shout was heard, and a little girl darted across the street. A number of thoughtless boys

emerged from the opposite side, and were throwing snowballs at the fleeing child. She sprang around the corner, uttering a cry of terror, and fell upon the pavement, striking her head against the corner of a lamp-post. A large bundle which she carried rolled into the street. Z sprang through the door, followed by a number of the other clerks, and the rude boys skulked away out of sight.

Z lifted the apparently lifeless form of the little girl from the pavement, and carried her into the store. She was about seven years of age, and was very pale and thin. She was clad in much worn summer garments, and a very ragged shawl was thrown over her head and pinned under her chin. Her feet were bare and blue with cold. Her hair, which fell in a mass around her neck and shoulders, was filled with snow. Z sat down near the fire; the child gave a moan, and, opening her eyes, looked around in wild astonishment, saying, "O where am I?"

A deathlike pallor blanched Z's face as he exclaimed: "Is it possible? This is little Bertha Bleucher."

The child was but slightly stunned, and she soon awoke to full consciousness. She looked into the face of her rescuer a moment in bewilderment, and then said, "O, Z, you were always so good; I know you will not let those bad boys hurt me."

Mr. Coupland came to Z's chair and said gruffly: "If you know where the waif belongs, you may take

her home. I will excuse you from further service this evening."

"But I do not understand the child's condition," said Z. "When I knew the family, a short time ago, her father was in possession of a goodly amount of property, and I can not see what has brought the child to this plight so soon."

"Ah, indeed!" answered Mr. Coupland; "perhaps if you ask the child she can tell you all about it."

All the information that Bertha could give was that everything had gone wrong since the preacher had turned her papa out of the church. However, when Z said, "How came you to be out on such a stormy night without shoes?" she answered: "I have had no shoes this winter. Mamma said that I could not go out to get the washings any more, because it was too cold. When mamma was gone the other day, little Roy got so sick that she has to stay with him all the time now. To-day was the day to get Mrs. G.'s washing, and mamma could not leave little Roy. I begged her to let me go, but she said that I could not go out on such a day as this without shoes. She watched by Roy all last night. When she fell asleep in her chair this evening, I slipped out of the house, ran to Mrs. G.'s and got the washing. Mrs. G. told me to run home as fast as I could, but as I was running down Willow Street some boys began to throw snowballs at me, and in trying to get away from them I got lost, and fell down and hurt myself."

When she had ceased speaking, Mr. Coupland

said impatiently: "Z, take the child home, and be back on time to-morrow morning."

"Please let me get her some shoes and stockings," answered Z, quietly. Permission being granted, he selected what he desired, and holding them up for Mr. Coupland to see said, "Please have these charged to me."

One after another of the clerks gave some article of clothing to the child. Her mother and little brother were also remembered. Mr. Coupland stood looking on with the satisfied air of a business man who was extremely gratified by making some unexpected sales.

After Bertha's outfit, as they called it, was made up, and the bundle containing Mrs. G.'s washing had been restored to her, Z started with her to find her home.

The snow was falling fast and blowing into long drifts when they emerged into the open street. Z inquired of Bertha where they lived; but she was completely lost, and did not know which way to turn. He therefore hired a carriage from the nearest livery barn and instructed the driver to take them to Mrs. G.'s, on Willow Street, and there inquire the way to Bertha's home.

Soon Z was stowed away with his little charge in the carriage, and they were whirled through the drifting snow. Bertha nestled close to him, and pressing her cheek against his said: "I believe you are the best boy in the world, and if you had stayed with us may be they would not have turned papa

out of the church, then everything would be so nice."

Mrs. G. directed them to the home they sought, and the driver soon drew rein in front of a low, weather-beaten shanty. The door was open, and a woman was standing on the threshold peering out into the storm. An exclamation of joy broke from the mother's lips as Bertha sprang from the carriage and ran into her arms.

Z dismissed the driver, and followed Bertha into the house, as he wished to help Mrs. Bleucher, if he found it necessary. Mrs. Bleucher received him kindly, but a pained look was on her face as she said: "How came you to our aid when you had received such ill treatment from my husband?"

"Never mind the past," answered Z, kindly. "We have the present only to deal with, and we can not better our conditions by sadly reflecting upon the past. I have the evening to myself, and I will be glad to be of service to you if it is in my power. Bertha tells me that little Roy is sick, and you have become tired out by watching him. I will be glad to watch for you through the night, and you may rest."

Mrs. Bleucher thanked Z heartily as tears of gratitude filled her eyes.

"Is there anything the little patient would like to eat?" said Z, in an undertone, to Mrs. Bleucher. Her face flushed crimson; but she told him as calmly as she could, how the little one had desired what she had been unable to furnish. "However,"

she added, "I can not think of appealing to your generosity."

Z immediately left the room, saying that he would be back soon, and went out into the storm. He soon returned to the cottage well laden with packages containing articles to supply the present wants of the destitute family. When he got back, little Roy was awake, and Bertha was sitting on his bedside giving a glowing description of her ride in the fine carriage, and of the goodness of Z, who had bought her such nice shoes and given so many nice things to them and their dear mamma. When little Roy saw Z he threw his arms aloft and gave an exclamation of joy. Z hastened to his side, and the little wasted arms were twined about his neck. "O, Z," he whispered, "you will never leave us again, will you? We were all so happy when you were with us."

Tears of joy filled Z's eyes as he watched the sick child eat the dainty morsels he had brought for him, and he earnestly thanked God for the privilege of giving cheer to the little sufferer.

The little one finished his supper, and, nestling close in Z's arms, was soon asleep. Z sat for some time holding the little wasted form to his heart, while Mrs. Bleucher sat on the opposite side of the room busy with some needle-work. Presently she arose, and, taking the sick child from Z, put him to bed. Bertha had already retired.

Z spoke to Mrs. Bleucher as follows: "Pardon me, but I must ask how came these reverses to you?

When I last knew you your prospects seemed bright enough, and I can not understand what could have brought you to these conditions so soon."

Mrs. Bleucher raised tearful eyes to the speaker, but she answered calmly: "It can all be told in these two words, drinking and gambling. As you know, my husband had contracted these habits, and even before you left us had become overwhelmed with debt. Soon everything we owned was sold to meet those obligations, and we moved into this wretched hovel. I believe Mr. Bleucher tried to reform, and for a short time we were comparatively happy; but he went back to his old habits again, and now we are dependent upon what I can earn for our support. My health has been very poor, and sometimes we are in need of the necessaries of life."

Thus during the evening Mrs. Bleucher gave Z a history of her past life, and before they knew it the midnight hour had come. He persuaded her to retire, and he sat by the couch of the little sufferer, awaiting the morning.

Several times the little one awoke, but he was as often gently soothed to rest by the patient watcher.

At last morning dawned, Mrs. Bleucher awoke greatly refreshed, and Z went back to his work at the store.

## CHAPTER VII.

# The Protracted Meeting.

As the winter advanced, the weather became intensely cold. Great piles of snow filled all the lanes and alleys. Even the streets were at times almost blockaded in spite of the constant labor employed to keep them cleared.

Nothing unusual had occurred to disturb the quiet of the people of W—— during the season until considerable stir was occasioned by the heretofore unheard-of success in a protracted meeting held in the city by the Rev. J. T. Hargood, the pastor of one of the churches. We can better describe the meeting by taking our readers with us to the sanctuary and allowing them to observe for themselves.

The night was stormy without. The snow was falling fast, and the wind was piling it into drifts in every sheltered place, in street corners or by the sides of the buildings. Passage along the street was difficult, and yet there were a large number of people from every quarter of the city wending their way to the house of God. Rumors said that a number of the citizens had been converted, and this had excited curiosity; hence many of the people were desirous of hearing and seeing for themselves.

Let us follow the crowd into the church at the hour of worship. The bell has just ceased ringing as we open the door and enter the room. As we step into the light and warmth of the large, commodious church, we are startled to see it filled from the choir loft to the last pew, and even much of the standing room is occupied. The organ begins a beautiful, old-fashioned melody. The choir leads out in animated song, and is joined by the congregation. The song is soul-inspiring, and we are not surprised to see that the faces of the singers look serene and happy. As the song progresses, let us take a hasty survey of this large concourse of people.

First the choir. Never before in the history of W—— has a chorus of singers realized the presence of the Lord in His sanctuary as do the singers of to-night. Every face is aglow with a sense of the importance of the occasion, and every heart seems to throb a response to the sentiment of the song as they sing—

> "There are lonely hearts to cherish
> While the days are going by,
> There are weary souls who perish
> While the days are going by."

Among the singers of that choir, and also among many of the worshipers in the congregation, there seems the present sense of duty to perform and souls in imminent danger to be rescued. See also the pastor. How serene and calm he looks as he sits behind the sacred desk! In his soul is heaven-born charity for all; and as he looks over the diverse

crowd before him he offers a silent prayer to God for a fitting message for each one of them.

Look also at the amen corner. There are the fathers and mothers in Israel, of various forms and faces, however with but one sentiment—that of earnest prayer. I wish you to take special notice of that lady, Mrs. Burley by name, who is sitting on the front pew in the amen corner and next to the congregation. She scarcely knows whether she should consider herself in the amen corner or in the other part of the congregation. She is equally puzzled to decide what her duty is: whether it be to assume an attitude of prayer or to keep her eyes on a trio of boys who are sitting on one of the front pews and joining heartily in the singing. Mrs. Burley can not look at them without a feeling of contempt and scorn. She has several times warned the pastor of them; for she is sure that they are likely to be too forward in religious matters for boys of their age, and will, in consequence of this, come to a disastrous stop somewhere.

The boys who interest Mrs. Burley at present are Monroe Bailey, Charles Fulton, and our friend Z. Monroe is sitting at the end of the pew, and as the song progresses he now and then lapses into silence and seems to be absorbed in thought. Then again he arouses himself, and joins in the singing with a zeal that is an apparent endeavor to drown thought. Charles Fulton sits next to him with a face all aglow with a rapture of praise. Charles's hand is tightly clasped in the hand of Z, who sits also beside him,

and his every movement indicates a happiness which he can not find words to express. Just a few evenings ago he was converted, and it was through the earnest solicitations of Z that he was induced to kneel at the altar for prayer. Z is singing heartily, and every sentence of the song seems to come as a burdened prayer for the unsaved ones around him.

The remaining front part of the church is filled by the usual number of Christian worshipers, and the rear of the building is filled by a more motley crowd. There are men and women of various walks in life. Some have come for the sake of mere curiosity, others for sport only; while still others have come because they are interested in their soul's welfare and are inquiring what to do to be saved.

While we were making our observations the preliminaries of the service closed, and the pastor now begins his discourse. In plain and simple language he gives them the story of the Lost Sheep. The truth of the Divine message animates his entire being, stirs his very soul, and reaches every heart in that attentive audience. As he dwells on the sacrifice that the Good Shepherd made for the straying sheep, many eyes are filled with tears, and a sense of the Divine presence fills the house. The artless but loving message has now closed, and they have arisen to sing the invitation hymn. There is some commotion in the congregation, as all are anxious to see the results of the splendid discourse.

Mrs. Burley seems scarcely able to control herself at all, but manages to be calm long enough to

walk over to where Z stands, and tell him in very sarcastic tones that she hopes he will keep a little boy's place to-night, and let older people do the talking to sinners. Z's face flushes slightly, but he does not answer, and she is gone down one of the aisles of the church, giving vent to loud shouts.

Z grasps his cousin's hand as the people are singing, "Are you coming home to-night?" He speaks in low, earnest tones to his cousin, and the words we do not hear. Nearly a score of penitents are already kneeling for prayer. Monroe raises his eyes, and glances at the altar, and his face is very pale. He hesitates a moment, and then, hastily withdrawing his hand from Z's grasp, says firmly: "No, Z, I will not yield to-night; so there is no use in your spending further effort on me. You had better seek a more promising subject;" and with this remark he leaves the house, not to return again during the meeting.

Z turns from him with an aching heart. He has led a number of persons to the cross. Why not his beloved cousin, who is so good about everything else? He starts down the aisle, scarcely knowing where he is going, but with a prayer on his lips for Divine guidance.

Suddenly his attention is arrested by a peculiar spectacle in the rear part of the church. An old man is standing with arms folded and figure perfectly erect. He is roughly clad, and an old cap clings to one side of his head. His long gray hair falls in rolls around his neck, and a very heavy

gray beard hides the lower part of his face, falling in waves upon his breast. Tears are coursing down his weatherbeaten cheeks. Z, giving an exclamation of joy, rushes forward and throws his arms around the old man's neck. "O, dear good Mr. Patterson," he cries, "how glad I am to meet you again, and that in God's house!"

"Yes," replies the old man, huskily, "I am glad to meet you, and I know you are at home in God's house; but me, old, hardened sinner that I am, He can not receive."

Z stands talking earnestly with Mr. Patterson as the choir ceases singing, and the minister, seeing the situation, announces another hymn. A score and a half of penitents are at the altar and the singers sing,

**"Christ receiveth sinful men."**

The old man hesitates, and Z speaks earnestly of the forgiving love of Christ. The gray head is bowed until it rests on Z's shoulder, and the old man is trembling in every muscle.

"Come," says Z, "it is only adding sin to sin to stay away from the Savior when He is lovingly calling for you."

The old man raises his eyes as if in prayer, and then says, "Steady me, Z, my boy, and I will try to start for heaven to-night."

Z is supremely happy as he leads the old man up the aisle of the church and to the altar, where he kneels with other penitents seeking for pardon.

The storm is raging furiously without, but Heaven's sunshine reigns within. Many souls are made happy to-night, but none more fervently thanks God for deliverance from sin than does Thomas Patterson, the former infidel.

Thus the meeting progressed as such meetings do. Some evenings the services were more interesting than others. However, we will look into the sanctuary but a few times during the entire series of meetings.

Only three evenings have passed since Thomas Patterson was converted; nevertheless his patient little wife, one son, and three daughters have yielded to the Savior's love.

I wish to take a peep into the sanctuary this time during the closing services of the meeting. The house is crowded as usual. The minister has closed an eloquent appeal to the unsaved. The congregation is singing an invitation hymn. A number of seekers are already kneeling at the altar. Mrs. Burley stands near the wall, with a look of disgust depicted on her face. She has been unable to persuade any one to seek salvation during the entire series of meetings. But the two boys, Charles Fulton and Z, whom she has repeatedly admonished, have led a score at least to the altar.

Z and his friend, Charles Fulton, are earnestly pleading with the unsaved to accept the Savior, but are startled by something unusual in the back part of the house. A harsh oath is uttered, and a drunken man staggers up the aisle toward the front part of

the church. A number of the members spring forth to meet the intruder and put him out of the house.

Z takes in the situation at a glance, and pushes his way through the crowd to the side of the unfortunate man as strong arms seize him, and, in spite of stubborn resistance, are forcing him toward the door. Z first pleads with the men to desist, and then turning to the intruder speaks to him in a low tone. "My dear Mr. Bleucher," he says, "please let me take you to where you will be more comfortable." With some difficulty Mr. Bleucher is persuaded to follow the boy from the room.

"My *dear* Mr. Bleucher," mutters a man who is standing near the door; but he wears a long overcoat and is so closely muffled that his face is nearly hidden. No one seems to know who he is. However, he follows Z and Mr. Bleucher from the house.

Z is toiling along with his charge, who leans so heavily upon him that he can scarcely walk, and observing that he is followed by a stalwart form he is uneasy. Mr. Bleucher stops suddenly, and, uttering fearful oaths, declares his intention of going back to the church to avenge some imaginary insult.

Z steps firmly before him, and lays a hand on his arm. Mr. Bleucher, in a frenzy of rage, deals the boy such a blow with his fist that he falls headlong into a drift of snow and is almost smothered. Presently strong arms raise him up, and a kind voice says, "Are you hurt much, little one?" Blood is streaming from a gash cut in his face, and he feels

somewhat dazed, but he answers quickly, "O no, but where is Mr. Bleucher?"

"He lies there comfortably enough, I guess," replies the man, with a chuckle of satisfaction. "I laid him down to rest after his exertion in giving you such a lift," he continued, pointing to where Mr. Bleucher lay struggling in the snow.

"O, how could you?" exclaims Z, springing forward and helping Mr. Bleucher to arise.

"I will assist you in getting this wretch where he belongs," says the stranger.

"If you please," replies Z, "we will take him to my room for the present;" and the trio move on down the street in silence, save for an occasional direction given by the boy. Mr. Bleucher now leans on the strong arm of the stranger.

As they near Z's room, Mr. Bleucher shows signs of disquiet, and it is discernible that he is going into delirium. With difficulty they get him into the room, and Z, asking the stranger to stay with him, runs for a doctor.

I will not attempt to describe the horrors of delirium tremens; but through the long night the doctor, Z, and the stranger—who proves to be George Whitefield, whom we first met with the freighters—watch beside Mr. Bleucher in his frenzy, and witness the horrors of this terrible malady; a sight to make one shudder.

Toward morning Mr. Bleucher becomes quiet, and is sleeping. The doctor has gone home. Mr. Whitefield is sitting on the opposite side of the

room from where the sick man reclines, and Z is kneeling by the couch of the sleeper in earnest prayer.

Presently the boy rises from his knees, and tenderly smooths the hair on the brow of the sleeper. Mr. Whitefield coughs slightly, and, turning in his chair, covers his face in his hands. Z quickly steps to his side and says:

"Is there anything the matter with you, Mr. Whitefield?"

"No, nothing," replies the latter; "only I could not bear to see that bruised face bending so tenderly over the one that had so cruelly wronged you."

"Did you ever know me to return evil for evil?" inquires the boy, eagerly. "If so, may God forgive me."

Mr. Whitefield turns very pale, and, catching the boy in his arms, says with fervor:

"Do you always forgive in this manner?"

"I fear that I do not always forgive as I should," replies Z; "for to be Christian is to be Christlike, and He always forgives."

"O God! could I but have a like forgiving spirit!" exclaims Mr. Whitefield, earnestly.

"Let us ask God to help you," says Z; and as the boy again kneels to pray, Mr. Whitefield kneels beside him.

Z prays earnestly to God, asking Him to show Mr. Whitefield the forgiving heart of Jesus, and when he ceases Mr. Whitefield's face is bathed in tears.

When the day dawns Mr. Bleucher is removed to his own home, Mr. Whitefield seeks his own apartments, and Z returns to his work at the store.

As the hour for service approaches the next evening, Z is somewhat perplexed to know what to do. He can scarcely bear to go to church with that horrid-looking wound on his face, and yet duty seemed to impel him. At last he says, "I will go for Mr. Whitefield's sake." He soon knocks at the door of the latter, and, with some urging, persuades him to go to church.

Mr. Whitefield sits near the center of the church, and Z joins his friends in front. The service proceeds with the usual interest, and at last the invitation hymn is sung. As the song begins, a number of penitents bow at the altar. Z steps back to Mr. Whitefield, and, placing a hand on his arm, looks pleadingly into his eyes. Mr. Whitefield, trembling with emotion, lays his finger gently on the wound in Z's face, and, raising his eyes toward heaven, cries, "O God, give me also a forgiving spirit."

"Come," whispers Z; "He was wounded for our transgressions, and by His stripes we are healed."

Mr. Whitefield places his arm around Z's shoulder, and the two step forward and kneel at the altar together, Mr. Whitefield still clinging to the boy. Soon a shout of triumph announces that the seeker has found the forgiveness of Jesus.

During this series of meetings many found peace in a Savior's love, but none proved more faithful than did Thomas Patterson, a former infidel, and George Whitefield, a typical man of the Wild West.

## CHAPTER VIII.

# The Death of Little Roy.

Let us visit for awhile the humble cottage home of Mrs. Bleucher, again in the somber twilight of the declining year. The dry leaves of autumn are falling from the trees, and being whirled around the cottage with every gust of the wind. Without, the cottage looks desolate enough, as seen in the deepening gloom of an autumn twilight. From within there shine forth signs of comfort. The cottage has been newly furnished with many an article to cheer its occupants.

Z has secured for Mrs. Bleucher employment, so that she has been enabled to add many things to the comfort of her home, while he himself has devoted a part of his earnings to the support of the lonely family.

A cheerful fire is burning on the grate, and the room looks quite inviting. On a beautiful couch—a present from Z—which stands near the fire, reclines a little sufferer. Exposure had wrought its work on the delicate constitution of little Roy, and although in the springtime he had shown signs of regaining health, with the decline of summer he had

grown gradually weaker, and the anxious friends had but to await the time when all that was mortal of the little sufferer must be laid beneath the sods of the valley.

Bertha stood by the foot of her brother's couch, listening anxiously for every word that might fall from his lips. Mrs. Bleucher and Mr. R——, a minister, were sitting by the bedside of the sick child engaged in conversation. The sufferer raised his head and said in faint accents:

"Mamma, will my Z come to-night?"

"I do not know, darling," replied the mother, tenderly; "but my precious one must wait and see."

"I must have my Z with me to-night, dear mamma," he continued, and Bertha, unobserved, donned her hood and slipped out of the house.

"My sister," said the minister, "why did you not let us know of your unfortunate condition, that we might have given you assistance?"

"I believe," replied Mrs. Bleucher, "that not one of your flock cared to know anything about me after they were successful in getting the name blotted from their records. Of course, I do not blame them for removing the name of my unfortunate husband from their records, but God knows that the greater sufferer has been myself. However, not one of them inquired after my welfare, and had it not been that God sent me a friend in the person of a child whom my husband had greatly wronged, I do not know what might have been my lot. We are getting along nicely now, and but for the illness of my child and

the misfortune of my husband, we would be quite happy."

"Had we known your condition," replied the minister, "we might have offered you assistance; but as you did not appeal to your friends, we, of course, could know nothing about your sorrows."

"Did not the Savior seek the sorrowing in order to comfort them?" asked Mrs. Bleucher, calmly.

As the conversation proceeded the minister was led to see how unfaithful he had been as pastor to the patient, suffering woman, who had been one of the most faithful of his flock during her more fortunate days.

Let us here glance into the room of Z on this same evening. He was sitting by the fire attempting to read, but his mind was ill at ease. He was still in the service of Mr. Coupland at the drygoods store, and Monroe was still with Henry Bolte. Z seems to be greatly puzzled over something. At last he arose from his chair and picked up a crumpled letter that lay at his feet. He read it carefully, and then turned to look into the large mirror near him. He was silent for some time as if in deep meditation, then he spoke as if replying to his reflection in the mirror:

"No, I shall not go to watch with the sick child to-night, but will accept Mrs. Hargood's invitation to spend the evening at the parsonage."

He was donning his great coat when he heard a feeble knock at the door, and on opening it saw little Bertha Bleucher standing on the threshold.

"O, please," she cried, "dear brother is very sick, and he wants you with him to-night."

Z took Bertha's arm in his, and they started for the humble cottage. The minister had just gone, and Mrs. Bleucher had scarcely missed Bertha when the two arrived.

"O, Z," exclaimed Mrs. Bleucher, "how glad I am that you have come this evening! My little boy has been calling for you, and I am sure it is very kind of you to come."

"Pardon me," replied Z, flushing crimson, "I deserve no thanks as I had stifled my conscience, and had determined to go elsewhere for my own pleasure. Had it not been for the sister love in the heart of this precious little girl, I fear that I would have been of no service to you this evening. I saw Rev. Mr. R—— this evening, and he promised that he would look after your comfort, so I somewhat eased my conscience with the thought that he would certainly provide watchers for you."

"I fear that my former friends have cast my name out as evil," replied Mrs. Bleucher, with tears. "If I am to receive real help, I must depend on you, my best friend. I so much hate to rob you of all your pleasures, but I can not see how I can spare your assistance at present."

Without further words Z took a chair by the couch of the little sufferer, who had fallen into a troubled sleep.

"How glad I am," he said to himself, "that I was not gone when Bertha came, as I should not have

been here this evening, and my friends would have been alone!"

Presently the sick child opened his eyes, and gazed around the room with a dazed look. Then he observed that Z was sitting beside him. He reached out a little, wasted hand in welcome, and said, smiling:

"I am so glad you have come. I want you to sing for me."

"What shall I sing, my treasure?" Z asked, as he stooped over and pressed a kiss on the fevered brow.

"Sing all the nice songs you know about heaven," replied the little sufferer.

With some difficulty Z was able to master his feeling sufficiently to sing, in trembling tones, first, "The Home of the Soul," then, "My Heavenly Home is Bright and Fair," and songs like these, the little one calling for another, and still another, until the hour grew late. At last the sick child said:

"Sing but one more song, Z, and while you do hold me close in your arms, for I am growing very cold."

Z folded the little wasted form close to his heart as the tears coursed down his cheeks.

"Now sing 'Beyond the Dark River of Death,'" whispered the child, faintly.

"Why sing that, my darling?" Z asked, with a choking sob.

"Because I know I shall soon cross over the river, and I want to think all the time about the

other side, where Jesus is," said the child, smiling faintly.

Mrs. Bleucher and Bertha, with faces blanched and white, drew near the little sufferer to catch every word that fell from his lips. He looked pleadingly up into the eyes of Z, and whispered again, "Sing."

Several times Z attempted to sing, but seemed unable to utter a sound, and still the pleading eyes gazed intently into his own. Finally, folding the child close to his heart, he began tremblingly to sing "Beyond the Dark River of Death," He gathered strength of voice as he proceeded with the song. In fancy he saw the Dark River rolling at his feet. Its waters seemed swift and chilling, but across the flood radiant gleams from the evergreen shore shone out in splendor, tinting every ripple of the troubled waters with the rainbow hues of God's promises. Never before had heaven seemed so near to the singer, and he was unable to understand the thrill of peace which he experienced at the thought that God was so kind during moments of great trial.

As the song closed, the sick child raised his hand, and, laying it on Z's cheek, said: "How well you sing to-night! But this is the last time you will ever sing for little Roy. Tell me all about heaven.—I want to hear you talk about heaven now."

Just then the door swung open, and the drunken husband and father staggered into the room. Bertha gave a moan, and sank on the floor at Z's feet.

"Y—you Zhee," almost shrieked the drunken man, "I 'll kill you if you do n't get out of my house and never return."

Saying this he picked up a chair and threw it at the boy, who sat with the dying child in his arms.

Mrs. Bleucher sprang to the side of her husband, and, throwing her arms around him, exclaimed:

"O husband, do be quiet. Our dear boy is dying. Can you not see? For heaven's sake, Mr. Bleucher, do be quiet, or you will regret it until your dying day," she wailed.

"I 'll fix that Zhee," replied Mr. Bleucher, with a fearful oath, striving to clutch something more to throw at the boy.

Bertha, crying piteously, sprang to her mother's assistance.

"O, please put me down, and help mamma to get papa quiet," pleaded the sick child, in fright.

Z carefully laid the child on the couch, and went to Mrs. Bleucher's assistance. After much pleading and some coercion they succeeded in getting Mr. Bleucher to bed, where he soon fell into a drunken slumber, all unconscious of the great sorrow that was darkening his home.

When Mr. Bleucher became quiet, Z went back to the couch of the child.

"Is my poor papa asleep?" asked Roy, trembling. "Then take me in your arms again, and tell me about heaven. Nothing bad will ever happen there where Jesus is."

Z took him up tenderly, and sat down by the fire. All was now quiet in the room except an occasional sob from Bertha and the labored breathing of the drunken slumberer.

Z began as best he could to tell the sick child what the Bible said about heaven, and for an hour or more he talked about the beautiful home of the ransomed; and O, how real seemed the scenes portrayed in the Word of God! The child listened intently, while his breath grew fainter and fainter as the last fleeting moments of his short life ebbed away.

Presently he raised himself up in Z's arms and exclaimed in triumph:

"O mamma, Bertha, Z!—Heaven is coming down to me, and it is so much better than you can tell! I am going now. Good-bye. In the morning, when my poor papa wakes, tell him that his little Roy has gone to heaven, and he wants him to come too."

He laid his head on Z's shoulder. One arm was entwined around his mother's neck and the other hand was clasped in Bertha's hands.

"O, beautiful heaven!" he whispered, and the soft, white hands became motionless, and the sweet voice was stilled in death.

Sorrow clouds hung heavily over the humble home; a mother's heart bled, and a sister was crushed with sorrow, but one more jewel shone in glory that night.

Soon Z prepared the little sleeper, this time asleep in Jesus, for the last resting place of earth, and the gray dawn crept through the window, and kissed the pale brow and sunny curls of the precious one lying still and cold in death.

## CHAPTER IX.

# In Society.

Mr. Bleucher was plunged into sincere and overwhelming grief when he awoke to realize the loneliness of his home, since the spirit of his child had flown during his drunken sleep. His sorrow was intense, and he earnestly and faithfully tried to reform. But what hope was there for success in such an effort, when on every corner there were man-traps set for his feet? What fearful odds were against him! It was the old story so often repeated: "He sincerely tried to reform; but in great temptation he fell, and sank to a lower level, if possible, than before."

How long will a nation and a people professing godliness make legal this soul-destroying business, the liquor-traffic? It is enough to make angels weep to see the total disregard that professors of Christianity have for the lives and souls of their fellow-men—yes, even their own sons and daughters—that they dare to legalize, by voice or ballot, the most potent agency that Satan has ever devised for peopling hell with souls that were born to a birthright of immortal glory.

Mr. Bleucher fell as other men have fallen, and always will fall under like circumstances, if they do not seek the aid of an all-powerful Savior, and the burden of a double grief fell on the shoulders of the pure, patient woman he had vowed to protect. But what are marriage vows or the most sacred ties of earth to a nation bound by fetters of greed to the licensed saloon? The only object of the business is to people hell with lost souls; and the most heart-rending appeals of slaughtered innocence or the severest griefs for sacred ties rent asunder are met with the coolest indifference, or passed by with a smile of satisfaction, because the soul-damning business is a success.

Already the grass grows over the narrow bed in the churchyard which holds the casket of little Roy, whose spirit has flown from earth to the Paradise of God. Now, as the sorrow cloud is distant, the mother can see the rainbow of God's promises shining across it, and the hope of meeting her little one in a holier sphere gives her comfort. New duties and new trials confront her, which she meets with a Christian fortitude. God cares for the dear one that she has given back to Him, but the beloved daughter still left to her claims her attention and love.

The old, unspeakable sorrow remains—*a drunken husband and father.* This has drawn mother and daughter close together, and in their battle for life they gain much strength and comfort from each other's love. We will dismiss them for the present,

and, praying that God will direct their future, let us visit Z in his own apartments.

Since he came to Mr. Coupland's service he has occupied a room in a boarding-house kept by Mrs. Doyle. Now he seems as one of the family. A little while before the time at which we wish to visit him, Mrs. Doyle has informed him that she must arrange larger apartments for him, as he has grown to be *almost* a man. Accordingly she arranged a comfortable suite of rooms where he could entertain his friends, or spend his leisure hours in comfort alone, just as he chose.

"I declare," she said, smiling, when she had arranged all to her satisfaction, "my little boy boarder has grown so tall that I have to look up to him now. Who would have thought when he first came that he would stay with me until he became almost a man?"

"Almost a man," repeated Z, as he surveyed himself in the large mirror before him. Then he wondered if to be "almost a man" meant to put away all habits of childhood. He wondered, also, if it was not childish to pray the little prayer his mother taught him, and if it would not be more manly to copy traits of character manifested in older persons whom he met. O for some kind angel to whisper to the boys at this stage in life, and tell them the true marks of manhood,—that all might know that it is *manly* indeed to preserve untarnished all the virtues of early childhood, and to guard the God-given purity of soul with the courage and zeal of a true hero; that it is unmanly and cowardly to yield to

the tempter sufficiently to tarnish one particle of native innocence and virtue!

Z had been promoted at the drygoods store, and consequently found more leisure for study and self-improvement. He had also spent many a pleasant evening with Mrs. Sails, who had been as a mother to him, and had taught him high ideals of manhood; but the summer roses have been planted on her grave.

When she died, Z wept as over the loss of a near relative, and had since spent much of his spare time alone with his books and his own thoughts. His pastor was delighted with his intellectual progress, and often pointed him out as a model boy. However, with much study and his duties at the store, he began to lose the buoyancy of youth and to look prematurely old.

Mrs. Doyle noticed this, and advised him to seek society. *Society!* What changes may be rung on that enchanted word! It may mean the association of the pure and good, such as begins heaven on earth; or it may mean the association of thoughtless pleasure-seekers in a giddy whirl over the very vortex of eternal shame and misery. It may be society, the elevating influence that develops all the heaven-born graces of a mind preparing for immortal glory; or society, the damning influence that, with ruthless hand, fills to the brim one's cup of eternal regret. O that young men might understand the power of society in shaping destiny! Then certainly all would strive to seek the best.

Mrs. Doyle spoke to Z's pastor about the boy's confining himself so closely to his studies, and asked him to advise the boy to seek the society of those of his own age.

"Certainly," replied the minister. "Wife and I have been talking about this, and have quite made up our minds that our friend needs congenial company. Therefore we have prepared to introduce him into such society."

Could the eyes of this kind-hearted minister have been opened to Satan's many devices in tarnishing society, all might have been well, and our friend would have been properly advised in the matter. Therefore he would have been better prepared for earth's duties, and more sure of heaven's rewards. But we learn from the Bible that where the sons of God met, Satan came also. However, we are anticipating results that are yet to be made manifest.

Mr. Hargood invited Z to spend a part of his time at the parsonage with such young company as the former saw fit to invite, and many an evening was made both pleasant and profitable to the boy. However, Satan knew how to enter even this fold.

In the home of Mr. Hargood was a bright little daughter about a year younger than Z, and the two soon became very much attached to each other. She always called him her big brother, and he was fond of addressing her as "little sister May."

One day, while Z was busy at the store, May Hargood came running in from school and exclaimed:

"O, brother Z, I have something nice to tell you. The Reverend Mr. Worley has returned to his parish in this city, and, with his family, will spend this very evening with us. Papa told me to call here and invite you to come too. I know you will be glad to meet Mr. Worley; he has traveled so much, and is so wise. It is a treat to hear him talk. Then he has such a grand wife, and his daughter Lydia is one of the dearest girls that ever lived. She is of nearly the same age as myself, and we are like twin sisters. I want you to meet her."

May had said all this scarcely pausing to breathe, and when she had finished she awaited Z's answer.

"I do not care to make further acquaintances at present," he replied, slowly. "Business and study demand much of my time. Besides I prefer to visit you when I can spend the evening with my pastor and his family alone, rather than to be in the presence of other company."

"O," replied May, quickly, "papa says you are making an old man of yourself by being such a hermit, and he would like to see you more in society. My papa is always right. He knows what is best, and the proper thing for you to do is to obey your pastor."

So saying, she laughed heartily, and left the room to join some of her schoolmates. Soon their merry laughter died away in the distance.

Let us visit Z in his new apartments at Mrs. Doyle's boarding-house on the evening he is invited to the parsonage to become acquainted with

the Reverend Mr. Worley and family. He was standing before the mirror, partly prepared to make his call, but with a look of perplexity on his face, and was silent for some time. Finally he said to himself:

"I wish I could understand the strange feeling that perplexes me to-night. There can certainly no harm come from a visit to my pastor and his friends, and yet I feel as if I were stifling conscience when I prepare to go. What can it all mean? I love society very much, and yet I fear its subtle power. If dear Mrs. Sails were alive I could go to her for advice that would guide me rightly; or, if my own dear mother were near—"

Tears were coursing down his cheeks as he picked up a letter which was lying on the bureau near him. He had read it several times before, but the tears flow faster as he reads again those endearing sentences that only a mother knows how to write. He paused to carefully peruse a sentence or two that seemed of deepest interest to him at that moment. He read aloud:

"My dear boy, always seek the society of the pure in heart and noble in purpose. Shun as poison every possible association that savors of evil in any form. Your aspirations should be shared alone with those of noble minds and exalted virtues. Always seek the society of the wise, the good, and the pure in heart."

"Has not my mother advised me to seek the society of the wise and good? If May's judgment is to

be relied upon, I am sure this is a fitting opportunity to follow that advice. Yet I can not understand this strange feeling which causes me to look upon the meeting with such apprehension of possible evil."

A moment he surveyed himself in the mirror, and, denouncing himself as a baby, hastily completed his preparations, and started for the parsonage. When he arrived at his destination he found that the other guests were there before him. Mr. Hargood introduced him, and from the manner in which they received him he inferred that they had been made somewhat acquainted with him before his arrival.

The Rev. Mr. Worley was a large, well-proportioned man, about six feet in height and of a commanding appearance. He was quite fair, with light-brown hair and beard, tinged with gray. His face was rather florid, and his large gray eyes seemed to have a faculty of laughing to every one he observed, even while the rest of his face looked grave and sober. He would not have impressed one as being a very pious man, but rather a man who enjoyed all the good things of earth. He cared little how the world fared, if only he were well cared for and had plenty of time and means for his own entertainment. He had traveled extensively, and had seen much of the world. He was a fluent talker, and the information he had gained made him a good entertainer, a distinction which he enjoyed greatly.

Mrs. Worley was a tall, graceful woman, with piercing black eyes and a haughty, dignified air, but with no special distinction save that of being a slave

to the pretensions of society and the claims of fashion. She was calculated to make one feel his inferiority in her presence. Although she smiled down upon Z complacently enough from her lofty reserve, he was glad to keep at a distance from the chill of her presence.

Lydia possessed much of her father's look and manner, although differing markedly in being quite small of stature. A wealth of golden hair hung in waves around her well-formed shoulders. Her large, expressive gray eyes shone out from under heavy lashes, expressing good will to all.

Taking the guests as a whole, Z felt that there was promise of a very pleasant evening.

Mr. Worley first entertained the company by giving in his characteristic way a rather glowing account of his last trip through Egypt and Palestine, always shading his narratives with a tint of self-heroism, but still presenting them in a highly entertaining way. At length he tired of talking, and, turning to the trio of young people that had been listening to him in rapt admiration, said, "I have entertained you long enough. You must sing for us."

Z thought May the most skillful pianist in the city, and he had desired very much to hear her play on this special evening. He turned to her and said:

"Please play a little, before you sing. We wish so much to hear you play."

"I never attempt to play when Lydia is present," replied May; "my music, compared with hers, is as

the shining of a candle to a summer sunshine. She will play for you. Ask her."

Z somewhat incredulously asked Lydia to play, hoping that she would refuse, and that May would play instead. He said to himself, "She can't equal little sister May."

Lydia, however, promptly sat down to the piano, and with the first strains of music, which seemed to roll out of the instrument, called forth by the touch of a magic hand, Z felt that he had suddenly lighted on enchanted ground. Never before had he seen such skillful playing or heard such strains of music as seemed to set the very air of the room to vibrating. His entire being seemed to respond to the thrilling tones of the instrument, and his eyes sparkled with delight at every new rendering of the sweetest melody he had ever heard.

Mrs. Worley watched him with a satisfied smile, proud indeed that her daughter could wield such an influence by her accomplishment as a musician.

Mr. Worley was delighted with the boy's appreciation of the music, and he carefully chose piece after piece, laying them before Lydia and keeping her playing for some time, always choosing music that he thought would best please the boy. He seemed to take as much pleasure in marking the success of his effort to please, as the boy did in being thus entertained.

Finally Lydia said that she was too tired to play more, and wished to hear some singing. Z hesitated when asked to join in the singing, but he was

so thankful for having been entertained so well that he sang as they requested. After a few songs, the hour being late, the company retired for the evening, but not until each one of the Worley family had repeatedly invited Z to their hospitable home in the near future.

Thus was our young friend introduced to the Rev. Mr. Worley and his family.

## CHAPTER X.

# A Birthday Party.

One evening, a short time after Z's introduction to the Worleys, there came a messenger boy to his room, and, with much ado, handed him a neatly written and elegantly perfumed letter, which he hastily opened and read:

"The Rev. Mr. Worley, wife, and daughter request the pleasure of entertaining Mr. ——, with other invited guests, at their residence on Lincoln Avenue, next Thursday, 8 P. M.

"(Signed,) Pauline Worley."

Z unhesitatingly wrote a reply accepting the invitation with thanks; but no sooner had the messenger gone than he said to himself: "Thursday,—why, that is prayer-meeting night. I have not missed prayer-meeting for some time; but I guess I must do so next time. Why should I tie myself down to all of the meetings of the Church? I believe I have not seen a half dozen young people in the prayer-meetings in as many weeks. I shall be more like other young people, for even my pastor has advised me thus."

The subtle power of the Tempter is such that he can turn the best intended advice to naught, or give a damning interpretation to the purest counsel that man is able to give; and his wary reasonings often deceive those of best intentions. The wisely meant advice of Mr. Hargood was turned to evil account, and Z absented himself from prayer-meeting that evening.

Pursuant to invitation, a number of the most religious young people of the city met at the hospitable home of the Worleys on Thursday evening. Z was delighted to meet a number of the members of his own Church there, as well as members of other Churches of the city. If all succeeding company could have been of like character, no harm, and possibly much good, would have resulted from those gatherings.

The evening was so well enjoyed by Z that on his departure, when Mrs. Worley invited him to return soon, he asked the privilege of bringing his cousin Monroe with him. This privilege granted, he went home with a light heart, and thought of other joyous evenings he was to spend in that excellent home in company with his beloved cousin.

So it happened that this home became a very familiar resort for both Z and Monroe, the former less frequently meeting his own pastor, and absenting himself often from the meetings of his own Church, until there seemed to be a widening gulf between him and his former associations. He met May Hargood quite often; but their meetings had been char-

acterized by a growing reserve on the part of each, with no perceptible reason for it.

Z was sometimes surprised to meet with certain guests who frequented the home of Mr. Worley,—such as Dorrance Boudine, the young man who had tried to deceive him in the saloon; March Carthurs, a wealthy young prodigal of vulgar manners; James Hugh Brass, of the drygoods store, also a noted profligate; and Clarence Cameron, a man of similar character. Z, however, dismissed all doubts as to the propriety of such associations by telling himself that the Rev. Mr. Worley, out of the goodness of his soul, was endeavoring to win them from the error of their ways. He was much shocked, however, when Mr. Worley ordered some wine brought from the cellar to treat his guests. But his conscience was stilled in a measure by the reverend gentleman's assurance that he did not use the vulgar liquors which depraved people imbibe, but only sweet, luscious wines of the kind which our Savior drank while on earth. Therein, he said, was the distinction between a man of cultured mind and an uncultured fanatic. The former has fine discrimination, and is able to discern between the refined beverages of polite society and the low grogs which tempt the appetites of the vicious and depraved; while the latter denounces all indulgences of the appetite for stimulants as sin, regardless of the fact that the Savior of the world allowed indulgences both by precept and example. However, Z's fears were only partially quieted by this bland but false

argument, as he noticed that the men whom he knew to be frequenters of the accursed saloon imbibed freely also of the beverages furnished by the Rev. Mr. Worley.

He sprang to his feet with a horrified expression when Monroe took a glass of wine offered him by Lydia Worley, first tasted it, and then drained the contents of the glass with a gleam of satisfaction in his eyes. Z stood for a moment as if unable to believe his senses. Then he exclaimed:

"To think that I should have brought my cousin where he would be tempted to forget the teachings of his childhood, and to put the poisonous cup to his lips!"

There was silence in the room for a few moments, as no one cared to answer the boy. Lydia burst into tears, as it dawned upon her that she might have done serious wrong unsuspectingly. Mr. Worley could not endure sadness of any nature; therefore he called for some music, and, selecting a lively air, bade Lydia play. These musical treats were so much enjoyed by Z that he soon forgot all else for the time being, and went home in a happy frame of mind.

The next morning Z met his pastor on the street, and asked him if he thought that the Rev. Mr. Worley would advise one wrongfully. Mr. Hargood looked puzzled. He had known Mr. Worley only under most favorable circumstances, and he very much valued him as a friend. Therefore he answered:

"I do not consider him exactly orthodox religiously, but morally I think he is a safe man to follow." Z did not answer, and Mr. Hargood continued: "I miss you very much from the prayer-meeting. Will you not come again?" And without waiting for an answer he hurried on down the street.

The boy stood watching him until he turned the corner out of sight. "I wonder what he would say if he knew," he said to himself. "And yet he does know all I do, and more perhaps; for he has known the Worleys much longer than I have." Thus satisfying his own conscience, he plunged into active business and forgot the subject for a time.

If he knew; ah, yes! If we all knew what results would follow our every action or advice, how much heartache and regret we might escape!

The gatherings at the Worley home on Lincoln Avenue were quite frequent and very enjoyable for the young people, as they were always enlivened by the choicest of music and the most interesting conversation. But on one special evening every one seemed to be excited over something of great interest. The wealthiest banker in the city, Mr. Worthington by name, was going to give a reception to a number of the young people, the occasion being the sixteenth birthday of his only daughter; and his wife desired to introduce her to society in a proper manner.

Mr. Worthington himself was too old to entertain company; but he had a habit of leaving to his wife complete control of such matters, and those who

knew her best declared her to be the most royal entertainer in the city. That excellent lady being desirious of keeping in touch with the Church—as she termed it—thought it necessary to invite the popular Mr. Worley and his family to the birthday party, and also to secure the assistance of the dignified and estimable Mrs. Worley in selecting guests for the occasion. So all the young people that frequented the Lincoln Avenue home were invited to this grand reception.

Z gladly accepted the invitation, as he said to himself: "All the religious young people that are invited are going, and why not I?" He looked forward to the event with pleasurable anticipation.

The daily papers discussed the important "reception to be given to the select of the city by the worthy Mr. and Mrs. Worthington, of Palmer Heights, and the public is assured that it will be a very grand affair."

The eventful evening at last came, and the expectant guests, with bated breath, began to make preparations for the reception. Z had made careful preparations for the occasion, and we wish to visit him just as he is getting ready to start for Palmer Heights. He has attired himself in one of the most expensive suits that can be purchased in the city, and yet, as he views his reflection in the mirror, he is dissatisfied with the picture it presents. The dress is faultless, but he does not like the boyish face that answers his every expression. He feels that he needs the commanding features of a full-grown man

in order to appear properly on so grand an occasion. His conscience also whispers to him that he is not doing right in attending this gathering; but he has learned of late to stifle conscience, and the battle is not so severe as at first. He steps out of the door as the bell of his church is calling the worshipers to the house of prayer, it being again Thursday evening. Placing a hand to his forehead, as if to shut out reflection from his mind, he hurries away.

Let us precede him to the mansion which is to be the scene of gayety. The structure stands on an imposing site, commanding a view of all the city and much of the surrounding country. The building has been planned and the grounds arranged with the thought of expressing an imposing grandeur which is more easily imagined than described. On this special evening, lighted from cellar to garret, the house seems to stand as a great monarch of grandeur, lifted up and illuminated so that other insignificant structures might behold and wonder.

Within and on the second floor are two large halls of most striking structure and decoration. One is fitted up for the innocent amusements of the religious guests, and the other is prepared for those whose conscientious scruples do not debar them from participating in more questionable pastime. At one end of these spacious halls is a large dining-room, where all the guests may mingle together.

Already a large number of the guests have arrived, and some are in the apartments where they can indulge in games of billiards or cards or partici-

pate in the dance, while others are in the other rooms, sitting in groups, talking.

Let us step into the former apartments, in order to become acquainted with four young men who are always found in polite society, and to whom many a fond parent has looked with hopes for a darling daughter's dazzling future. They are the young men whom we mentioned as guests of the Worleys.

First there is Dorrance Boudine. He is about five feet and ten inches in height, is large and well proportioned; his features are even and regular, almost to a fault; his hair and mustache are a glossy black; keen, piercing black eyes shine out from under heavy, black eyebrows and lashes, his face is as fair as the face of a woman, and his hand is as soft and white as a child's. He is known to be a wholesale liquor-dealer, and is extensively engaged in the brewing business. He also owns a controlling interest in most of the saloons of the city, and has led a very fast life. But he is wealthy; therefore he is much sought after by parents who wish to marry their daughters well, as they say.

I wish next to introduce March Carthurs. He is a rather short man, with red hair and beard, a florid countenance, and a little turned-up nose. He is very plain (as some would say), and, compared with Dorrance Boudine, actually homely. He has spent two large estates in fast living, but his uncle has left him a fine fortune; and when daughters argue the superior personal beauty of Mr. Boudine, parents answer back with the immense wealth of Mr. Car-

thurs, assuring them that his wealth came by no effort of his own; therefore he was born surprisingly lucky, which in itself is better than present wealth, only because it insures continued prosperity.

Let us now meet James Hugh Brass. About the height of Mr. Boudine, but much more corpulent, his hair and beard are a dusky brown, and his steel-gray eyes look around suspiciously in almost all directions at once. As has been stated, he is at present in the service of Mr. Coupland at the drygoods store; but his father had been a very successful merchant, and James had wasted all that was left him. However, his maternal grandfather still lived and possessed a fine fortune, which he had agreed to will to James as his rightful heir, only on condition that the young man reformed during the old man's lifetime. Otherwise the entire fortune was to be given to a charitable institution. The old gentleman had insisted on James becoming acquainted with business and reforming by the aid of useful employment; hence his occupation at the store.

Of course the society of W—— could not think of allowing a fortune to be taken from a rightful heir and given to cold charity. Therefore, many a father and mother, and even daughter, had an eye to the reform of James Hugh Brass, with the hope of possibly sharing its benefits.

Last of the four whom we thus introduce is Clarence Cameron. He is by no means the least, as he stands about six feet three inches in height, raw-

boned and ungainly. His features are rough and irregular. His hair and mustache are a dark brown, and a pair of large brown eyes peer out through gold-bowed spectacles, which rest on the bridge of a large Roman nose. He is not handsome, but has a pedigree and wealth. Besides, he has such a fine faculty of doing nothing at all but shining in society, or rather allowing society to shine on him! His grandfather had been a preacher of some renown, who had a book written of his life; and his father, though a farmer, had gained much wealth. Hence how desirable to society was Clarence, and how natural it was for fortune-hunting parents to write him down in their catalogue of prospective sons-in-law!

These were the men so indispensable to the polite society of W——, and whom the young girls were especially instructed to smile upon with favor. Is it any wonder that parents' hearts are caused to bleed over the recreancy of their children when such a premium is placed upon vice in the society of to-day?

Let us now return to Z on his way to Palmer Heights. When out upon the street he was joined by Monroe, and the two soon arrived at Mr. Fulton's gate. Z stopped, saying that he had promised to call for Charles and Ella. They were waiting when he came to the door, and they all started on together.

Monroe desired very much to have the company of the little golden-haired Ella, but Charles laughingly approached Z and said:

"I wish to have a visit with Monroe on the way, so I will expect you to take care of my sister; and

if her company for the evening is captured by another I shall hold you responsible for it."

He then took Monroe's arm, and they walked up the street together, leaving Ella and Z to follow.

I wish here to introduce Ella Fulton to my reader. She was very fair, and a wealth of golden hair hung in ringlets around her shoulders. Her bright blue eyes shone out from under a brow almost as white as marble. On her cheeks was the bloom of health, and her voice was very musical. She was not yet considered of sufficient age to be introduced into society, and she yet had the innocent and unpretentious ways of a school-girl. Z thought she looked more like a fairy than a human being, as she walked by his side on that beautiful moonlight evening.

Monroe and Charles walked on in earnest conversation. Z followed in silence, listening to Ella as she chatted away, telling of incidents in her school life, and of the prospects before her. Her father had promised to send her to a school of music as soon as she graduated in her home school, in order to give her advantages for cultivating what she chose to call her one little talent, her voice.

Edith and Arthur Caldwell joined this little party, and they soon reached Palmer Heights. With one accord they stopped on the broad, marble walk leading up to the front entrance of the building, and gazed upon it with a feeling of awe. They had seen the structure daily from a distance, and had considered it as a landmark of grandeur, marking a possible eminence of worldly ambition; but never before

had they viewed it from its immediate surroundings. They were all silent for some time. Then Ella doubtless expressed somewhat the feelings of all when she said:

"Let 's run back home, and have our visit all to ourselves."

"Not so," replied Monroe. "To be invited to festivities in such grandeur is certainly an omen of future success, and I hail the occasion with joy and great hopes for the future. Come, let us share the pleasures of the refined."

"God grant that your hopes may not be blighted by the bitter dregs of disappointment," said Z, fervently, as they moved on into the mansion.

We will not attempt to describe the scene which met their eyes in that magnificent mansion. Suffice it to say that about a hundred guests, of almost every human form and feature, were in that crowd. And yet only the *elite* of the city were there; so the daily papers said. The company was about equally divided in the two separate halls, but the large folding doors between them were open. In the one was music and dancing, and in alcoves and corners some were playing cards or other games of a like character. In the other were singing, instrumental music, and such plays as school children enjoy.

Mrs. Worthington had been reared in a plain and unpretentious home. Her father was a bookkeeper for a grain dealer, but she had suddenly been brought into favor with society by marrying the wealthy Mr. Worthington, who had admired her

pretty face when she was a school-girl, and had won her before she was out of her teens. He was older than her father, and had been twice married before. But he was very wealthy; therefore, fortune-hunting parents declared that she had made one of the finest catches of that generation. That was seventeen years before her introduction to my readers, and on this occasion we are to be introduced to her daughter, Geraldine.

Mrs. Worthington was often at sea to know what to do in polite society, but she had a happy faculty of seconding a motion very gracefully, if she only had a suitable leader to follow. This time she had the grace and dignity of the superior Mrs. Worley as an advance guard; therefore all the motions of the latter were seconded by the hostess with almost original grace. Consequently, when Mrs. Worley suggested that it was time to bring forth the heiress to introduce her to the distinguished guests of the evening, her worthy second immediately dispatched a servant to the retreat of the young lady in whose honor the superb gathering had convened.

Monroe Bailey had frequently met Geraldine Worthington, and had admired her with a sort of school-boy fancy. She seemed also to have a decided preference for him. She had called at the furniture store and urged him to be present on this occasion; therefore he hoped to be honored by introducing her to society, and also being her escort for the evening.

When Geraldine was brought into the hall her

dark eyes sought the face of Monroe Bailey, who was standing near the entrance of the room, with both Charles Fulton and Z beside him. Thus emboldened, Monroe addressed Mrs. Worthington, and asked the privilege of being her daughter's escort for the evening.

Mrs. Worthington seemed to be impressed with the importance of her daughter's first introduction into society, and before she could answer the boy she sought the advice of Mrs. Worley; but the latter was not at her right hand as usual. Mrs. Worthington looked all around in confusion. At last, espying Mrs. Worley she hastened to her for counsel. A few words were exchanged by these worthy ladies in consultation, and Mrs. Worthington returned to Monroe, who stood awaiting her answer. She approached him in an embarrassed manner, and said abruptly:

"When my daughter is introduced to society, it must be by a gentleman of distinction, and not by a beardless boy that has neither name nor prospect in life."

Mrs. Worthington had faithfully repeated Mrs. Worley's words; but the latter herself was shocked at the rudeness of the speech.

At this moment Dorrance Boudine, the wholesale liquor-dealer, approached Mrs. Worthington, and, bowing low, asked permission to be the escort of the heiress for the evening, and his wish was readily granted. Geraldine reluctantly took Mr. Boudine's proffered arm, and was led away, but not

until she had turned and looked full into the face of Monroe Bailey, with an expression of intense regret; for she knew that her mother's rude speech had severely wounded the pride of the sensitive boy. Monroe stepped back near the wall, and his face flushed with honest indignation as he said, in plain and distinct tones:

"There is not a ghost of a chance in society for a young man who endeavors to sustain a character, as fond mothers will insist upon paying a premium on debauchery. To shine in society means to be morally depraved and given over to vice and shame."

Both Mrs. Worley and Mrs. Worthington heard this plain speech, but their conscience told them that the boy spoke more truth than was pleasant for them to hear just then. So, instead of rebuking him, they stood eying each other with a cringing, silly look on their faces.

Mr. Boudine asked Geraldine for a promenade around the spacious halls, but she refused to go until Ella Fulton sang for her. Lydia Worley was asked to play the accompaniment. She was standing near her mother when Monroe Bailey was so rudely addressed, and her tender heart was touched, as she knew who had been the cause of his humiliation. She stepped over beside him and, taking his arm, said coaxingly:

"Come, Mr. Bailey, if I play I will need some one to turn the music for me, and I wish you to do that."

Monroe looked for a moment into the face of the artless young lady before him, and his manner changed to politeness as he led her to the piano and arranged the seat for her. Ella declared that she had sung all the good solos she knew, and that if she sang more she would be obliged to have the assistance of Z in a duet, which she knew he could render admirably. Z at first refused to sing in that large assembly; but as he was persistently urged, he took his place beside Ella near the piano.

Lydia Worley understood for whom she was to play, and before playing the accompaniment she rendered some of the most heart-searching melodies at her command, which made Z forget all else besides the music. Consequnetly, when the accompaniment was played, two young voices rang out in perfect harmony.

The audience listened in rapt admiration, but when the song was closed the singers refused to sing more for the time. During the singing Geraldine had several times tried to speak to Monroe, but her wily escort was on the alert and every attempt had been thwarted. Mrs. Worley curled her lip with scorn when she saw the attention which Lydia paid to Monroe in her efforts to make him forget the past unpleasantness, but she said to herself:

"My Lydia is intended for the wife of an English lord, and she is so much above the common class of people that I fear no danger from any undesirable attachment to them on her part. Her conduct toward those so far beneath her is but the expression of a

kindness of heart which will eventually make her a choice star in London's superior society."

Geraldine, pale and trembling, was led by her escort through the spacious halls, to be introduced into society. Vainly she tried to free herself from the admirers that clustered around her, in order to seek the more congenial society of those of her own age. But she was an heiress, and society must needs shine upon her in all its brilliancy. Her time was completely taken by the worthies we described in the former part of this chapter, and their comrades of like character.

Dorrance Boudine expended his most musical intonations for her benefit; James Hugh Brass claimed her attention with a brazenness that did credit to his name; March Carthurs exhausted his store of broad, bland smiles upon her; and even the lofty Clarence Cameron adjusted his spectacles many times and smiled down upon her with a complacency that caused a flutter of emotion among the fond mothers of that polite assembly.

One incident of this birthday party is worth special mention. During the earlier part of the evening the groups in the different apartments remained separate, but at supper they came together in the dining halls, and some new acquaintances were formed.

Z noticed with sadness that the tables were furnished with wines of all descriptions and to suit all tastes; but he had little apprehension for Monroe, as the latter had faithfully promised never to take a

drop of intoxicating liquor again as long as he lived. He was humiliated to think that he had received and drunk the wine from the hand of Lydia Worley, and he determined never to drink again under any circumstances.

The supper being over, many were standing in groups talking, while others were imbibing freely of the beverages supplied for the occasion.

Z was conversing with Ella Fulton and Lydia Worley when a smothered cry and a pained look from Ella caused him to look in the direction which she indicated. His heart seemed to stand still when he saw Geraldine Worthington—still leaning on the arm of Dorrance Boudine—raise a glass of wine in her small, white-gloved hand and touch it to the lips of Monroe Bailey, who drank its contents with an expression of gratitude in his dark-blue eyes. Dorrance Boudine filled another glass, and Geraldine was handing it to Charles Fulton when Z sprang forward to catch the glass from his lips. The glass was knocked from the hand of the young lady, and falling on the table broke in pieces, spilling the contents on Mrs. Worthington's table-linen.

Many of the guests held up their hands in horror at this rude intrusion upon the tranquillity of the occasion, and Charles Fulton turned upon Z with fierce anger in his eyes; but Ella threw her arms around her brother's neck and exclaimed:

"My dear brother, have not father and mother taught us never to touch the wine?"

Charles Fulton was humbled and silent for the

rest of the evening; but after meditation he was truly thankful to his friend for the part he had taken in the matter.

Z sat down on a chair in the corner of the room, feeling utterly miserable over his mishap, and trying to frame in his mind an apology to Mrs. Worthington for the unfortunate accident. Many were discussing the affair, each with his own interpretation, when Z's attention was arrested by voices on the other side of the folding doors near which he was sitting.

"Ah," said a voice which he recognized as that of Clarence Cameron, "that Monroe Bailey is indeed a very handsome lad, and if he could only fall heir to a fine fortune I am sure he would shine in society. But as for that other lad, whom you so much admire, I can not say so much. He has qualities that might serve him well in society if he were not too much of a temperance fanatic to amount to anything."

Z heard a voice in reply that sounded like music, though it uttered terms of reproof. It was the voice of a woman. "Mr. Cameron," it said, "I would to God that the pure, noble boys who are reared in Christian homes might be saved from the contaminating influences which society throws around them. Monroe Bailey has qualities which would adorn a true manhood, if society, with its baneful influences, would but leave them untarnished to fulfill their God-given mission; but he also has weaknesses that will cause him to be too easily influenced by wrong, and I therefore fear for his future. The other young

man whom you esteem so lightly, has moral courage, if I mistake not, which will enable him to protect his virtues against the hollow pretenses of false society."

At this a subdued and polite laugh was heard, and March Carthurs spoke.

"Who would have thought," he said, "that the distinguished star of the society of W——, Miss Joliet Yarrow, would turn missionary preacher and defend a common street Arab, whom society had tried to elevate, in his rude outbursts upon the tranquillity of such an occasion as this."

Miss Yarrow again spoke, but this time in tones of severe rebuke.

"March Carthurs," she said, "I do not consider you a suitable person to discuss virtues to which you are a stranger, and I need not inform you that your presence and conversation are distasteful to me."

Thus rebuked, March Carthurs moved on, and Clarence Cameron resumed the conversation.

"You are a little hard on Carthurs," he said; "he but speaks the truth when he designates the lad in question as a common street Arab. If you could have seen him as Boudine saw him a few years since, you would quite agree with Carthurs."

"Mr. Cameron," replied Miss Yarrow, "I have heard what Mr. Boudine has to say about the time when this young man first came as a boy to W——, and, if I am rightfully informed, Mr. Boudine played a very unenviable part in attempting the moral destruction of the boy when he was lured into the saloon by music, of which he is so passionately fond.

Need I tell you again, Mr. Cameron, that I do not value dollars nor pretensions of caste; but I do prize virtue and innocence in mankind, with moral courage to preserve them against the false charms of society, more than all the wealth of the world beside."

"Well, well," replied Clarence Cameron, "I have learned not to argue with the brilliant Miss Yarrow, whom none knows but to adore. But I sincerely hope that your philanthropic nature may not induce you to throw away your talents, beauty, and wealth on some object of charity."

Z arose from his seat, much of the misery of his mind dispelled. There was one at least in the house who appreciated his efforts to do right, although he had fearfully blundered. He longed to see Miss Yarrow, whom he believed to be a superior woman. Although he did not remember having met her, she had seen him and appreciated his efforts to do right. He felt thankful to God for having sent him comfort in his hour of misery. He stepped out into the hall, where the doors stood open, just as Miss Yarrow passed by, leaning on the arm of her brother.

He had expected to see a handsome woman when he saw Miss Yarrow, but he was surprised beyond measure by the picture before him. She was of medium height, and of a form more perfect than a statue. The inky black curls which adorned her head were tied by a crimson ribbon with a bunch of scarlet geraniums in the bow, the curls hanging in profusion around her shapely shoulders and down to her waist. Her large, expressive brown

eyes sparkled with life and animation; her brow was of almost marble whiteness; her face looked very young, even girlish, and her cheeks wore the bloom of youth; but in manner she bore the grace and dignity of mature years. Her small white hand, more perfect than the work of the most skillful sculptor, held a bouquet of scarlet geraniums. Her costume was of white satin, of the most becoming pattern. Z thought that she was certainly perfection, and did not wonder that she was called the distinguished star of the society of W——.

Miss Yarrow gave Z a smile of recognition, which dispelled most of the unpleasantness from his mind.

Little of interest occurred during the rest of the evening. Geraldine was kept in the hall, where they were dancing, and saw but little of her younger friends, who were playing school games in the other hall, stopping now and then to gaze wistfully at the dancing party, who, they imagined, were enjoying themselves in a superior manner.

We find Z frequently standing near the doors, looking into the dance hall as Miss Yarrow is whirled past in the giddy waltz, or listening as she stands near the partition conversing with a friend. He seems to be desirous of hearing the sound of her voice. But the hour of parting came at last, and the gay company went home.

Monroe Bailey and Charles Fulton locked arms, and strode down the walk in silence, followed by Ella leaning on the arm of Z, and chatting merrily.

When they reached Mr. Fulton's gate, Ella paused long enough to whisper in Z's ear, "Many thanks for the protection of my dear brother," and then ran into the house. The rest of the way Monroe and Z walked on in silence.

Z entered his own room and was soon in the land of dreams, his mind confused over the events of the past evening, as he lived them over again in the fantastic scenes of dreamland.

## CHAPTER XI.

# Gleams of Eden's Dawn.

A FEW evenings after the party at Palmer Heights, Z was again by special invitation at the residence of the Worleys on Lincoln Avenue. Lydia rendered some of the latest music in the most artistic manner, and Z was delighted beyond expression. Mr. Worley seemed greatly pleased with the boy's fondness for music and said to him:

"My friend, I believe that your soul is very musical indeed. Why not give vent to your feelings by expressing the music of your nature in dance? There can certainly be no harm in developing a graceful bodily movement in response to a soul so filled with music as yours. I would not have you find amusement in the low society that frequents the vulgar hops of our town, but no harm can come from your having a genteel waltz with Miss Lydia while I furnish the music. Never fear," he replied to Z's hesitation, "my daughter can teach you the step in the most artistic manner, and I shall be fully repaid for furnishing the music by seeing your musical talent expressed in a graceful way."

He laughed at Z's expressed fears that it might

not be right for a Christian to dance, and, sitting down at the piano, played with surprising skill.

Z hesitated for a moment. Then he said to himself, "Has not my own pastor told me that, morally, this man's advice is safe to follow?" And he allowed himself to be led by Lydia through the changes of the fascinating waltz. At first trembling and blushing, with many an awkward blunder; but soon mastering the step he seemed to be carried away as if on fairy wings. So charming was the music that it thrilled his entire being. He was in the midst of an animated whirl when he saw the face of Mrs. Burley pressed against the window-pane and her keen eyes peering into the room. Z soon ceased dancing, and made preparations to go home.

His entertainers seemed to be delighted with his achievement, as they called it. They also urgently invited him to spend the following evening with them, as Joliet Yarrow had promised to call at that time, and had expressed a desire to meet him.

"Now," said Mr. Worley, "we have prepared you to better enjoy the company of Miss Yarrow. She is a star indeed, and we are happy to have her as one of our parishioners. I scarcely need to tell you that her esteemed father, mother, and brother all belong to our Church. They are the very cream of society, and such always find a congenial home in our excellent Church," he continued, with a smile of satisfaction.

"I think Miss Yarrow is a jewel indeed," exclaimed Lydia, "and our friend here ought to think

himself highly favored in receiving attention from her,—a boon which many others are pining for. It seems that some beneficent fairy god-mother is shaping the destiny of the young man," she added, laughing merrily.

Z took his leave without replying to either of these remarks, but with many thanks for being so well entertained, and went home with a mingled feeling of pleasure and unpleasant apprehension.

The next morning he again met his pastor on the street, and again asked him if he thought the Rev. Mr. Worley would advise one wrongfully. Mr. Hargood looked puzzled; he was at a loss to know how to answer the boy, but he said quickly:

"As I said before, I do not think he is strictly orthodox religiously, but, morally, I think him a safe man to follow."

Z's only answer was a satisfied smile, and he went on down the street, leaving Mr. Hargood standing alone with a puzzled look on his face. At last he said to himself:

"I do wonder what has come over the boy. I have seen him but little of late. He wholly ignores the Church services, shuns our society, and when I do meet him he propounds that strange question. I will speak to wife about it," he added, and walked on up the street.

Z met Miss Yarrow at the home of the Worleys that evening. He was surprised to find how easily he became acquainted with her, and how freely she conversed on all topics of interest to him. She

seemed to be especially well versed in his favorite studies; consequently, they spent some time in earnest conversation.

Finally Lydia declared that she was almost dying to see Miss Yarrow and Z waltz to her music, adding that she did not believe that two more congenial persons could be brought together, regardless of what society might say to the contrary. Miss Yarrow smilingly said that it would be well to grant Lydia's wish, and Z was soon whirling through a lively waltz with society's star, the beautiful and accomplished Miss Yarrow. He could scarcely believe his senses, and in the pleasure of that hour he thought of nothing else. Once only he thought of his Church vows and his duty to his Savior. But he stifled conscience by assuring himself that his pastor had told him to follow the Rev. Mr. Worley as a safe moral guide; and he knew his conduct was pleasing to the reverend gentleman. Z was about to start for home, when Mr. Worley said, laughingly:

"Young man, I expect you to furnish Miss Yarrow a suitable escort to her home. I had expected that office myself, but your company will be more agreeable to the young lady."

Soon Z was strolling along the street toward Ivy Bower, the magnificent home of Joseph Yarrow, with Miss Joliet leaning on his arm. The full moon had risen, and was flooding buildings and landscape with its silvery light. Z was surprised at himself to find that he could converse so easily with the beautiful and talented lady at his side. She seemed so differ-

ent from what he had supposed a flattered heiress would be. Although he deemed their stations in life so widely separated, he thought of her as a noble and helpful sister who would make his life more pleasant by associating with him.

They were discussing a topic of interest, when, on turning a street corner, they met Mrs. Burley, who stepped aside and eyed the two with scorn depicted on her face. She did not speak, but soon went on with a loud sarcastic "Ahem," and a stately toss of her head. The two young people exchanged a smile, and resumed their conversation. They soon reached Ivy Bower, next to Palmer Heights the most pretentious residence of W——. It was situated on an eminence southeast of the city, and at right angles with Palmer Heights. The house stood on the center of a hill which sloped gradually in all directions. To the east, and back of the mansion, a beautiful woodland sloped to the banks of a clear running brook. North and south stretched the broad acres of a superb farm, while toward the west, and fronting the city, a large sloping lawn, divided by wide stone pavements, extended to the suburbs of the city itself. A number of majestic oaks stood in the front lawn; two of which, standing on each side of the front gate, were profusely covered with ivy, crossing and recrossing over the walk in a beautiful arch of green, and giving the home its name. Throughout the grounds surrounding this beautiful residence there was an air of home comfort and ease. The lawns, rose-bowers, and flower-gardens were arranged with

the thought of making home-life attractive. The residence on Palmer Heights was more pretentious, but this splendid home had attractions with which that did not compare.

Z stood in rapt admiration, looking at this beautiful home, the scene now mellowed by the silvery moonlight, wondering if Eden itself could have been more beautiful. He went home, after having received an invitation to make one in a party of young people there on the following Monday evening.

The next evening, after Z's first visit to Ivy Bower, we find him in his own rooms engaged in earnest conversation with Monroe Bailey.

"It is of no use for you to talk to me, Z," said Monroe, firmly, "if you are going to lecture me about persevering in our old puritanic habits. I can not submit to such irksome restraint; for I have ambitions that can not be satisfied with mediocrity. I know that my business ability will insure financial success; for Mr. Bolte has repeatedly told me as much. I also feel the qualities of a superior business man burning in my very bones; but, above all, I wish to be able to shine in society,—a prize I covet more than riches or honor, although I know that riches are especially illuminating in the eyes of society, even if honor be a minus quantity. I am convinced that I never can wield an influence in society if I do not surrender all puritanic ideas and give myself over to a certain degree of indulgence. Of course *I* shall never become a drunkard or a moral wreck, for these

things I do abhor; but I mean a certain degree of indulgence which society deems indispensable to gentility."

"I can not see," replied Z, earnestly but quietly, "that in order to be a man of society you need to ignore the teachings of your childhood, and tarnish your God-given virtues by vices which but reflect, though in a limited degree, the debaucheries of the depraved. For my part, I can see but little difference between a tipsy gentleman and a drunken vagabond, even if the former's reason is but partially dethroned, and that by the superior beverages of polite society."

"You are putting the case entirely too strong," retorted Monroe, flushing angrily. "I only mean that I can not conform to the straight-jacket teachings of pure fanaticism, and thereby enslave myself by a self-imposed denial of my personal liberties. I wish further to remind you that you yourself have broken over many of the rules of your early training. Besides, your case is different from others. It seems that the fates have decreed your elevation, and somehow every blunder you make is turned to your good. You seem to be doomed to favors in spite of yourself. I envy you the attentions of the Rev. Mr. Worley, and especially Lydia. Not that I care much for their friendship, except that it would enable me to advance in society. I even had not the favors of little May Hargood to assist in making me respectable in the eyes of the Upper Ten, and her favors have been trampled beneath your feet when more

desirable attention was tendered you without your seeking.

"I need not tell you that I much desired the company of sweet Ella Fulton in order to appear well when visiting Palmer Heights for the first time; and yet that honor fell to your lot without the asking. And as if your cup of favor was not already full to overflowing, fate turned your foolish blunder to good in the eyes of the beautiful heiress, Miss Yarrow. If I mistake not, accident threw you in company with her just last evening. I assure you my eyes nearly leaped from their sockets with envy when I saw you strolling along in the moonlight with Miss Yarrow leaning on your arm, as you chatted together so merrily. I would almost give up my hopes of future success for such an introduction into society."

"Your native eloquence has carried you into extravagance of speech," replied Z, smiling, "and you lay entirely too much stress on the importance of society, which is but an empty name, and for which no one can afford to surrender a single virtue. Miss Yarrow says that either wealth or favor of society are mere trifles when compared with innocence of character, which is worth more than all the world beside."

"If you are in deliver sage lectures of that character," replied Monroe, laughing, "I may as well go home; for I see we can not understand each other. So I bid you good-night."

"Not until you have promised me that you will never again taste intoxicating liquor in any form,"

answered Z, placing his hand on Monroe's shoulder, and looking him fondly in his eyes.

"I promise you that I will never become a drunkard," replied Monroe, kindly, and the two cousins parted for the night.

Z was one of the gay company that were entertained at Ivy Bower on the next Monday evening, and as he was urgently invited to visit there at any time suiting his convenience, his calls at the Lincoln Avenue parsonage became less frequent, until he scarcely ever met the Rev. Mr. Worley except at Church on Sundays, and he had almost become a stranger to his own Church and pastor.

His visits to Ivy Bower became so frequent that he told his cousin it seemed like going home. Miss Yarrow was always ready to help him in his studies. She possessed knowledge and wisdom which afforded him wholesome assistance and advice. He looked upon her as a marvel of intelligence; therefore he was surprised to learn that she was younger than himself. As a pianist she equaled Lydia Worley. So many an hour was pleasantly spent by him in this excellent home, listening to the finest of music or engaged in profitable conversation.

Mrs. Yarrow always received him with stately dignity, but, after passing the time of day, returned to her novel-reading, and gave him no further attention. William Yarrow was a young man thoroughly spoiled by society, and he was seldom at home. Therefore Z saw but little of him. Mr. Yarrow was a thorough business man, and was away

from home much of his time. Z had met him but few times. He, however, had become very much attached to the boy, and when at home always gave him a cordial welcome.

When springtime came, Z often enjoyed a stroll through the spacious lawns and verdant woodlands of Ivy Bower, in company with Joliet. She had begged him to drop all formalities and address her in the familiar home name of Jollie. Therefore I wish her to become known to my readers by that name, which she delighted in.

One Sabbath afternoon of early summer, when Jollie and Z were returning from a stroll through the green woods, they were in earnest conversation.

"Now," said she, in musical tones, "you may sit down on this rustic seat by the rose arbor; and while I weave you a garland of roses you must give me a more complete history of your past life."

Z gave her a plain, truthful account of his life, particularly mentioning his very humble station; to all of which she listened with closest attention. Her eyes filled with tears when he told her of his loneliness at times when battling with the trials of life in years too tender for an equal struggle.

The balmy breezes of summer fanned the face of the speaker and blew the sunny curls into masses over his head and brow. The same breezes toyed playfully with the mass of inky curls that fell so gracefully over the beautiful head and shoulders of the listener, weaving with a skilled hand the garland of roses.

A robin flew to a bough overhead, and poured forth a melody of praise to nature's God. Z felt the charm of the hour, and his voice was low and musical. He closed the narrative by saying:

"I have often pined for the association of brothers and sisters. I often long to clasp my own darling sister's hand that I might confide in her my whole mind. But somehow I can not refrain from confiding in you, whom I esteem as my best friend and my own true sister."

Jollie with trembling hand placed the garland of roses on his brow, and, blushing crimson, said:

"May we not in the future sustain a relation nearer and dearer than that of brother and sister?"

Z glanced quickly up into her face, his eyes beaming with a hope which he had not dared to entertain.

The robin still sang from the bow overhead. The roses nodded in the breeze that now playfully entwined the dark curls around the neck of Z as her head rested upon his shoulder. The murmuring winds mingled the curls of black and the curls of gold.

Say you that *gleams of Eden's dawn* may not return to earth, tinting life with joys that might bloom into the full splendor of Eden's first morn, making a veritable paradise of earth, were it not that sin and death cast their clouds over the skies of human happiness, many a time dimming earth's fondest joys?

But there was another present, who was an interested observer of this scene. Jollie sat down beside

Z, and the two, with clasped hands, were looking dreamily over the richly flowered arbors and lawns when Mr. Yarrow stepped from behind a rose arbor near by, and, advancing, placed a hand on the head of each. His eyes filled with tears, and his voice trembled as he said:

"God bless you, my children. Pardon this intrusion, but I was in heart living over again the fondest day-dream of my life. May Heaven shield you from the blight that destroyed my life's happiness, and may the joys of this holy hour be your perpetual accompaniment through the succeeding years of your life! Jollie, my precious daughter," he continued, "you remember that I once told you I had an experience which I might some day relate to you. You asked me why at times I would look so dreamy and sad. The scene on which I have just now so fondly gazed affords an opportunity to confide in you a secret which has been my burden alone through the past years."

Mr. Yarrow spoke with a tender pathos, and he presented a striking picture as he stood gazing fondly into the eyes of the young couple whom he thus addressed.

He was a man of stalwart frame. His luxuriant hair and brows were of a steel gray. His face had been fair in youth, and his large expressive brown eyes were faithfully copied in the eyes of his beautiful daughter before him.

"I think," he continued, "if I understand the

heart of my jewel of a daughter aright, that she is now prepared to hear and comprehend my secret."

Jollie sprang to her feet, and throwing her arms around her father's neck exclaimed:

"O, my dear, noble father, had I power I would shield you from all sadness. Your secret will be held very sacred in the trust to which you may now confide it."

Mr. Yarrow smiled through his tears, and said to her:

"Be seated. I can best relate my story standing where I can view you two as an image of my perished hopes."

She complied with his request, and he began, in pathetic but musical tones:

"This narrative will scarcely be of interest to other minds than my own, and yet I seem to be impelled to relate it. In a land distant from this I was once a happy boy, of humble birth and modest pretensions. Sometimes, in my dreams of the possibilities of the future, my air-castles would be quite lofty; but usually my ambitions were satisfied by the hope of one day having a farm of my own, as I was a farmer boy. But, alas! there came into my life another presence which seemed to color my every ambition with the hues of Paradise. In imagination I can see before me now a form and face as fair as those of my own dear daughter. I need not rehearse here an experience which, I believe, has just been repeated before my eyes. I was a lad, they said, without name or rank in society; therefore my fond-

est hopes must be blighted, that my coveted treasure might glitter in halls of splendor. The reluctant hand of my fair queen was given by her parents to a wealthy nabob of her father's years, and of chequered character. In a palace of splendor she pined for affections which grandeur could not allow. Soon her lovely form was laid in a cold, damp grave, and an imposing monument was raised to mark her resting place.

"O God!" he continued, in a wail of grief, "could that marble but speak to the world the cruel murder thus wrought by the ruthless hand of worldly ambition, and men be thereby awakened to realize that Heaven decrees to bind hearts together by ties of moral worth and mental adaptability, then society's tarnishing hand could be made to cease polluting the most sacred ties of earth."

He cleared his voice, and then continued:

"Crushed in spirit, I plunged into business, determining to drown the purer emotions of my soul in the greed for gain, and the world says that I have been emimently successful. In course of time ambition seemed to point me to your own dear mother as a congenial life partner. May God bless her! She is deserving of a husband whose heart is more truly her own. Now, my children, you have a father who understands you. Confide in me, and I will see if I can not start you properly sailing down the stream of life."

He ceased speaking, and stood looking fondly

upon the two before him. His face was wreathed in smiles, though tears coursed down his cheeks.

Jollie again twined her arms very tenderly around her father's neck, and assured him in many endearing terms that he was the best father on earth, as well as the most kind and considerate husband to her dear mother. Z also arose, and, taking the hand of Mr. Yarrow in his own, he pressed it fondly to his lips, but could not find words to express his gratitude. Mr. Yarrow again spoke. "My children," he said, "let us sit down together, and I will help you plan for the future. Let us see. I will be obliged to go abroad on business this winter. Therefore oblige your father by letting me see you settled in life before I shall have to go away."

Z pleaded his youth, and expressed a desire to defer a step of so much importance until of riper years; but Mr. Yarrow answered that such ties were made by Providence, and their consummation should not be deferred until the blight of sin tarnished their sacredness, adding that he very much wished to see one couple united by first affections, as he believed that such were joined together by the will of God. "I am a practical man," he said, "and I believe in settling matters at once. So let us celebrate next Thanksgiving-day with this happy union."

Mr. Yarrow arose with this remark, and walked slowly toward the house, with his head bowed and his hands folded behind him.

Jollie and Z sat for some time near the rose arbor, and when they came to the house they found

the stately Mrs. Yarrow almost in hysterics over her husband's rehearsal of what our reader already knows. Z dined at Ivy Bower that evening, but Mrs. Yarrow kept her room.

After dinner, Z and Jollie walked to church, and heard Mr. Worley deliver a scholarly discourse, of which I fear they remembered but little. From church to Ivy Bower, and from Ivy Bower to his own room at Mrs. Doyle's, Z walked as if on enchanted ground. When alone in his own room he held a stout debate with the mirror, assuring it that he was surely a man if the reflection did proclaim him a boy; but dissatisfied with the contest he retired, and was soon lost in slumber.

## CHAPTER XII.

# Weighed in the Balances and Found Wanting.

THE next morning Z went to business with new zeal. It seemed to him that he had awakened in a new and enchanted world, that all was happiness now, and the future presented one gleam of bright prospects. But he was soon made to realize that the world still had sorrows unassuaged. Ella Fulton came into the store, ostensibly to make a few trifling purchases, but in reality to joke him about the frequency of his visits to Ivy Bower. The two were conversing pleasantly when they were startled by Monroe Bailey's staggering into the store. He leaned up against the counter and eyed them with a drunken leer.

"Still tasting the sweets of life, are you?" he said to Z. "Not so fine with your humble servant—hic, got bounced—dead broke—sadly in need of a helping hand."

Ella slipped out of the store and hastened away, scarcely believing her senses. Z stood staring at his cousin in astonishment. He had seen but little of him for some time. It was rumored that Monroe had been frequenting the saloon of late, and Z had attempted several times to meet him; but he had

been avoided whenever possible. When he did obtain an interview he was assured that there was little danger. Therefore after he had enlisted the sympathies of Mr. Bolte in his cousin's behalf, he dismissed him from his mind.

From the time the glass of wine was given to Monroe at the birthday party he had gradually acquired the drink habit. Although he stoutly contested every advantage which the drink demon obtained over him, persistently declaring to himself that he would be nothing more than a moderate drinker, he sank below the power of control. Thus the Tempter wove his subtle web around him. Just as others had fallen, Monroe fell. The drink demon is no respecter of persons.

Mr. Bolte faithfully endeavored to restrain the downward course of his talented clerk, but to no avail. As was inevitable, the crisis came. He was dismissed because he was no longer of any use to himself or anybody else. He left Mr. Bolte's the evening before, and awoke in the morning to find himself out of employment and penniless.

Z took his cousin to a hotel near by, and, asking the landlord to take care of the unfortunate young man, dispatched a boy with a message to the mother, who, he knew, would be almost brokenhearted at the news. He went back to his duties at the store; and although he could not dismiss his cousin's unfortunate condition from his mind, he was too lighthearted to look on the dark side of the matter. He said to himself, "Monroe is not very bad yet, and

I am sure the magic hand of a mother can set him right. Few," he continued, "have mothers that equal the excellent Mrs. Bailey." He partially dismissed the unpleasant subject from his mind and was allowing his thoughts to wander off into dreamland, when he was again rudely awakened from his day-dream. Mrs. Burley came stalking into the store, and stood a moment staring at him with scorn and indignation depicted on her face.

He had avoided her as much as possible, but she had encountered him several times, and each time had given him a good all-round tongue-lashing. So the warm blood mantled to his brow, and he met her keen gaze with a rather defiant response. She broke the silence by hissing between her teeth:

"You rascally hypocrite, I 've got you cornered at last, and I mean to give you a piece of my mind."

"I advise you," retorted Z, "to retain all the mind you have, as you have but little to spare."

He had never before replied thus to Mrs. Burley. Therefore she was somewhat chagrined by this response, but soon recovered from her surprise and replied haughtily:

"Ah! So you have lost all your manners as well as your religion, if you ever did have any of either. To tell you the truth, I never did believe that you ever had any more religion than Judas Iscariot. Now, hark you, if you have manners enough to keep still while your elders are talking, and I will give you in brief what I believe to have been your former life. You doubtless have sprung from some disreputable

place, which was only worthy to belch forth criminals, have come to the abode of decent people, and in order to take some criminal advantage of them, have put on a sanctimonious air and wormed yourself into their favors in the name of religion."

Mrs. Burley did not believe one word of these assertions, but she was angry and intent on revenge. "In the first place," she continued, "you worked your way into a Christian home, and led a son, the hope and pride of a mother, astray. I refer to Monroe Bailey, she shouted angrily. You led him away from his home. You led him away from his own Church into one of the devil's ranks. You led him into questionable society. And I believe that, with your own hands, you gave him the first glass of wine he ever tasted. Now he is a confirmed drunkard. There are others who know you have in like manner attempted to destroy both Charles Fulton and Arthur Caldwell. Besides I saw you myself, with a fickle girl on your arm, almost whirling your silly head off in a giddy waltz."

In like tirades of abuse Mrs. Burley continued until she was out of breath. Z stood looking at her with an amused smile, realizing that she was much excited. She paused for a moment to get breath, and then resumed:

"You are a pretty hypocrite. You are a nice hypocrite." And she rolled the last word over her tongue as if it were a sweet morsel to which she wished to treat her gustatory nerve as often as possible.

"Have you studied your next Sunday's lesson?" she almost shrieked. "Read it. Read about Belshazzar. Heed the solemn warning, *'Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting,'* is as true of you as it ever was of Belshazzar. Do you think that I have kept track of you for the past few years for nothing? I know you like a book. I have served notice on Brother Hargood that you must be turned out of the Church. Did n't I see you dancing? And did n't I see you walking the streets with one whom I know is no lady? I understand that you are much in the company of that haughty Miss Yarrow, and I assure you she is no lady, *no lady.*"

At this remark Z's face flushed, but he answered quietly:

"I presume, Mrs. Burley, that you consider yourself an ideal lady; but I am happy to say to you that opinions differ."

"You black-hearted hypocrite," she retorted, "I shall have you turned out of the Church at once. I will not live in the same Church with the likes of you."

She commenced another harangue of abuse; but Mr. Coupland had been listening, and was greatly enraged when the woman mentioned the name of Yarrow so disrespectfully. He esteemed the family very highly, therefore he stepped before Mrs. Burley and said firmly:

"Madam, I must bid you to leave the store, and not return until you are in a better frame of mind."

Mrs. Burley stalked out of the store with a scornful toss of the head, and Z resumed his work.

It was a very busy day, therefore Z's mind was well occupied with his duties until time to close the store at night. On his way home he called at the post-office and received a letter, bearing the mark of his childhood home, and addressed in the well-known hand of his sister Lulu. He did not walk the rest of the way, but ran up the street, not stopping until he was in his own room and had broken the seal of the letter, which he eagerly read. After the usual opening, seasoned with many playful and endearing terms, the letter read as follows:

"My dear brother, do not be too much surprised when I tell you that during the winter holidays I shall change my name. I know that you can scarcely realize that I am a woman now; but you must remember that I am three years older than you, and mamma tells me that you must be almost a man now. I can't realize it. Surely you are the same dear little brother of mine that left us. It seems so long ago though.

"O, how I wish I could look into those beloved eyes again, and smooth your sunny curls once more! They seemed to reflect the sunlight all the time, and I am sure they would reflect happiness to my heart could I but behold them now.

"Your dear name," she continued, writing the real name of her brother in a beautiful flourish, "always sounds to me like sweetest music when spoken. I

shall have the opportunity of pronouncing it often now, for the man whose name I take bears the same Christian name as you, my brother. I wish to further state that I have a plan for you. I want you to come and live with me, and be my constant companion. Will you come?"

Z finished the letter, and then looked up with an amused smile.

"Surely," he said, "my sister can hardly understand that time is no respecter of persons, and that change is as inevitable for the one as the other."

Then he sat down and wrote a hasty reply, which he carefully read. He paused as he came to these words of his own writing:

"Dear sister, time has wrought such marked changes in me that I fear you would be greatly disappointed should I appear before you, not the happy boy of bygone days, but a man of many experiences."

He glanced at the mirror as he read the word "man," and his face flushed; but he answered the reflection defiantly, "Man, I say; yes, Man."

He continued to read: "Let not your surprise exceed mine when I tell you that days before you cast away the name which I shall be proud to retain through life, I will have added another to the claimants of the family appellation, who will bring to it the grace and dignity of earth's noblest queen, and who will shine in my Eden with a splendor that must be seen to be realized, for words fail to describe."

He laughed as he read this and said aloud: "I

guess my sister will find that I can become eloquent if I choose, as well as she."

He closed the letter, and immediately went out to post it; but his mind was ill at ease. He had sent Monroe Bailey home; but he could not dismiss him from his mind. Had he not been partially instrumental in his beloved cousin's downfall? Was there not a grain of truth at least in what Mrs. Burley said? "And yet," he said, "she grossly misrepresented me. She also spoke so disrespectfully of my own dear humble home, of which she knew nothing. She talked so horribly of others who, I know, possess Christian virtues to which her coarse nature is a stranger. I know I have tried to do right, but the members of my Church will never understand it so. What awful misrepresentations and misunderstandings humanity is heir to! I know that I follow God's teachings, at least as well as Mrs. Burley herself. If I am found wanting when weighed in the balances, I am certain that she, with many others, will tilt the beam on the wrong side of the scales."

Strange that he did not see that it was but the Tempter who brought such thoughts to his mind. He could never justify himself before God by magnifying the wrong-doings of others. Yet how common this mistake! Christ is our only example, and Him we must follow, whatever others may do. Heaven is gained by the way of Calvary's cross. Could some one have spoken to the boy just here, and pointed him to the Heaven-given example, what sorrow might have been avoided! God help the

professing Christians to reflect more clearly the Christ-life, and then the young will not stumble so often over the mistakes of their elders.

Finally Z became more calm and said to himself: "I know I am not the Christian I ought to be. I have been especially careless of late. As I have a little time left this evening, I will go and have a talk with my pastor." On his way to the parsonage he thought how little he had availed himself of the opportunity of receiving friendly counsel and advice from his pastor. But he resolved to do better in the future. He was busy with these thoughts when he arrived at the parsonage.

Through the open window he heard a voice from within. It was Mrs. Burley, who was speaking. He heard her use his name in a torrent of abuse and false statements, and he became angered. At last she paused, out of breath, and the minister spoke.

"I wish you could speak a little more quietly, Sister Burley," he said; "I disparage dancing, as much as you do, and can not allow one of my flock to indulge in it. Therefore if, when weighed in the balances, as you put it, the young man is found wanting, I shall not spare him."

Z waited to hear no more, but turned away in anger.

"To think that he would cast my name out as evil for doing the very thing which he allowed," he said, haughtily. "I was satisfied that it was not right to dance, for my dear mother had taught me better. But in an hour of temptation, when I sought

my pastor's advice, he assured me that Mr. Worley was a safe moral guide. I have followed that gentleman's advice only to find myself an outcast from the love of God, and my name stricken from the records of my Church by the very man who was a party to my downfall. Ha!" he exclaimed, with a hollow laugh, "if weighed in the balances, I fear that both pastor and people will be found sadly wanting."

As he said this he entered his own room and glanced into the mirror. He was startled at his own reflection there, for he realized how much excited he was.

"Well, well," he said, "I certainly present a regular Mrs. Burley picture to-night; but I have been greatly wronged."

Doubtless the Tempter smiled triumphantly as he saw how successful he had been in turning well-meant counsel to evil, and in showing Z's faithful pastor to him in false light. But this is one of his winning cards, whereby he destroys happiness both in time and eternity.

Z dared not say more. He felt that the Tempter had the advantage of him, and he wept, but not tears of repentance, I am pained to record it, but in his heart was bitter resentment toward his friends. He realized that he had lost the joys of salvation, but, like other misguided souls, he laid the blame on others, and considered himself the innocent victim of their mistakes.

When will Christians learn that the light of God's

presence can be shut out of the soul by no other power than personal will? When will the followers of Christ learn that there is a sacred nearness to the Savior for them, the sanctity of which nothing external can invade? Let me plead with you, dear reader, to keep the vision of Christ so clearly before you that stumbling-blocks may not be in your way.

Z felt ill at ease; but he was partially contented by laying the blame on others, and he appeared as cheerful as possible. He spent much of his spare time at Ivy Bower, and was not unhappy, although he could not dismiss from his mind the thought of his undesirable religious condition. However, he had little time for reflection, for he was kept quite busy at the store. He successfully avoided conversation with any of the members of his Church, for he was sure that such a meeting would only bring unpleasantness.

Almost every day Mrs. Burley tried to corner him, and compel him to talk; but he eluded her. Mr. Hargood called twice to see him, but obtained no audience with him. The last time he left a note requesting Z to come to the parsonage that evening; but Z gave it no heed. He was in a mood to look on the dark side of every approach made by his pastor.

One evening, in the latter part of the week, he strolled out of the city to the river, and was walking along its banks when he saw Monroe Bailey and his sister Nellie coming from the city. They passed down the road to the approach of the long bridge,

and sat down on a rustic seat under a shade tree, and quite near the road. Z thought he would have a chat with them, and drive away the ill feelings from his mind; but something that Monroe was saying as he approached them caused him to stop beneath the shadow of the large tree and listen. Here again the Tempter asserted his subtle power, and the boy was caused to misinterpret what had been well meant.

"There is no use of your talking to me about Z, Nellie," said Monroe, doggedly; "he is as selfish as any of the rest of my acquaintances. In his own happiness he forgets all about his friends, and cares nothing for what becomes of them. My downfall he was in a measure responsible for, as Mrs. Burley will testify; and yet he gives no heed to our unfortunate condition during his great prosperity."

"Hush, my brother," replied Nellie, tenderly; you forget how faithful our cousin has been to us in bygone days, and how he has looked after our interests with a devotion that was a surprise to all of us. He probably knows nothing about our present condition, —which is not as bad as you think,—and we could not think of troubling him now. Mother said, just the other day, he had seen so little happiness that we should not mar his joy now by thrusting our burdens upon him. Come, dear," she continued, placing her hand upon her chest to control a paroxysm of coughing and regain her speech, "let us be going. You are not in a mood to reason properly to-night, and

I must be going home because the night-air is injurious to me."

"Then, why on earth do you always follow me when I go to the city? Do you think I am unable to take care of myself?" he retorted, pettishly.

"You are better in company with a sister who loves you as I do than alone," she replied, fondly, as she drew her arm around him.

Monroe could not vent his anger upon the sister whom he loved devotedly. However, there were angry thoughts in his mind, which he desired to expend on some one. Therefore he said hastily:

"Nellie, I wish you would cease to care for that Z. He considers you beneath his feet, and I assure you he cares nothing for any of us. Did not mother say, the other day, that if weighed in the balances, he would be found wanting? I hate him. I hate him. I would like to trample him beneath my feet."

Nellie said no more. She only clung to her brother, and led him away toward home.

Z started as if arousing from an unpleasant dream.

"O merciful heavens!" he cried; "is earth one round of misunderstandings and heartless ingratitudes? Must one's motives be always misconstrued? I could easily bear all that Monroe has to say or think of me, for he is intoxicated, but how can my own dear aunt so soon brand me as evil. I would surely think she would investigate my case a little before taking up that horrid cry of Mrs. Burley, and attaching it so unceremoniously to me. Ah,"

he continued, warmly, "if the Church of my childhood chooses to misinterpret my every action, I can turn elsewhere for spiritual guidance. So let them cast my name out if they wish."

Here he realized that he was not in a proper state of mind to reason upon the subject that should interest him most, so he walked out upon the bridge to gaze into the rapidly flowing river. The cool evening breeze fanned his brow, and he became more calm. He thought of little Nellie trying to support the form of her half-intoxicated brother.

"She can not make that trip to-night in her present state of health," he said. "I will take them home, if they hate me forever afterwards."

He went to a livery barn near by, ordered a team and carriage, and was soon driving rapidly down the road in the direction his cousins had gone. In a few minutes he overtook them, and cheerily asked them to ride with him. They were soon seated in the carriage whirling along the road homeward.

Monroe seemed to have forgotten his ill humor, and he talked away glibly, almost unanswered; for both Z and Nellie were silent and thoughtful. In the course of an hour they drew rein at the door of the cottage home. Monroe scrambled out of the carriage, and went directly into the house. Z lifted Nellie tenderly to the ground, and, bidding her goodnight, was preparing to return to the city. Nellie grasped his arm and said in surprise: "Are you not coming in to see mother? Why did you come out this way to-night if it were not to visit us awhile?"

"I came," he answered, "to bring little Nellie and her charge home, and as my mission is accomplished, I must return to town."

He was starting away, when he turned and said impulsively:

"Dear Nellie, when my former friends shall have sufficiently weighed me in the balances and found me wanting, and when my name shall be cast out as evil, may I not claim a kindly remembrance from you? It would be joy indeed to know that one at least of my former friends gave me credit for mistakes, and did not charge everything against me as intentional wrong."

Nellie clasped his extended hand and pressed it to her pale lips, saying:

"Dear cousin, my love for you and my faith in you will be as unchangeable as the everlasting hills."

Z thanked her heartily, and drove rapidly away, very greatly cheered by her kind words.

A few days after the incident just recorded Z was busy at the store, when a letter was handed him by an errand boy. He read as follows:

"September 19, 18—.

"Mr. ——: Dear Brother,—As you have repeatedly avoided me of late, it becomes my painful duty to ask you to meet a committee of your brothers and sisters at the parsonage this evening, in order to investigate certain rumors concerning your Christian conduct.

"Believe me your loving pastor and brother in Christ, J. T. Hargood."

Z looked at the terms "brothers and sisters," and said sadly, "Ah, if I could look upon these as more than empty terms I would indeed be glad." Tears came to his eyes as he read the endearing words of his pastor; but the Tempter was at hand and whispered, "He but wants to subject you to another tirade of abuse from the unreasonable Mrs. Burley." And Z resolved not to go near the parsonage that night.

On his way home that evening he received a letter from his mother, showing tender solicitude for her boy,—wishing him temporal happiness and prosperity, but, above all, the happiest and purest Christian life possible. He was not in a frame of mind properly to comprehend the message, but he wrote in reply:

"As to temporal affairs, I am doubtless very highly favored, but religiously I am literally weighed in the balances, and found wanting."

He posted the letter, and then started toward Ivy Bower. He was walking up the street, thinking that he would soon be in the presence of one who appreciated him and whose faithfulness to him would not be wavered by the storm of opposition that was gathering against him, when he heard a pleasant voice calling to him. He paused, and May Hargood came up beside him, and, taking his arm, said kindly:

"I wish to have a talk with you, Brother Z. I am sure I can be of service to you if you will allow me to be."

"You kind-hearted little sister," exclaimed Z, warmly, "how is it that you dare to speak with one

so utterly wanting in favor with God and man, as I seem to be at present?"

"Now, none of your lofty airs and haughty speeches if you please," replied May, laughing; "I came, prompted by a sister's affection, to help you. So please let me do it. Of course you know the investigating committee meets at our house to-night. I do not wish you to be there, as you would only be subjected to the abuses of poor Mrs. Burley. But answer for me two or three questions, and see if I don't champion your case with a devotion that would do credit to any sister."

"I appreciate your kindness more than words can express," replied Z, with tears of gratitude; "but I have quite made up my mind to allow my name to be removed from the Church records without striving to defend myself. I will never be understood by my former friends, and I do not care to trouble them with a presence that will be only distasteful to them."

"Not so fast, if you please," cried May, stepping in front of him, and smiling as she said, "I present a sister's affection that can not be stifled by cold conventionalism; therefore submit to my entreaties, and allow me to exercise my rights as guardian of your name. Now tell me: how came you to dance first? who gave Monroe Bailey his first glass of wine? and what did Mrs. Burley say to you the day that Mr. Coupland sent her from the store?"

Z hesitated; but May was irresistible, and he told her in brief what the reader already knows. When

he had finished speaking, May raised her hand, and pointing toward Ivy Bower, assumed a dramatic air as she exclaimed:

"Go, impatient one! Go gladden fond eyes that now eagerly watch for your coming. Go, rest thee in enchanted bower, while I keep vigils over your honored name, that it may not be tarnished by the ruthless hand of misrepresentation!"

So saying, she laughed merrily, and ran down the street toward home, Z watching her until she was out of sight.

"A real little fairy that," said Z. "O that earth were blessed with more like her!"

At home May found a dozen or more persons assembled. Just as she entered the room her father asked all to kneel with him in prayer. He prayed for Divine guidance, and arose with a calm, peaceful look on his face. Then he informed those present that he had called them together as an advisory committee, and he wished the meeting to be quite informal. "We will hear what Sister Burley has to say first of all," he said.

Thus given privilege Mrs. Burley sprang to her feet and reiterated what the reader has already heard, adding many other insinuations, and closed by saying decidedly: "I have quite made up my mind not to live with the likes of that in the same Church. So you have your choice between one that has been a faithful and active member of the Church for years and that sinful, good-for-nothing boy."

A number of the others said that they believed

all that Mrs. Burley had said, but really did not know for themselves.

Finally George Whitefield arose and gave a touching account of his first acquaintance with the boy. Then he told of the birthday party, and of Z's conduct there in rescuing Charles Fulton from the glass of wine, adding: "I heard that my young friend had backslidden, so I followed him to the party, and there, unobserved by him, I witnessed the scene I have just described."

There was silence in the room when Mr. Whitefield ceased speaking. The pastor wiped his eyes, for tears had gathered in them during this recital.

"Nothing further can be done," he said, "as I wish to investigate the matter alone for the present."

He was startled when May exclaimed:

"Please do not close this conference, father dear, until your daughter is allowed her testimony."

"Speak on, my child," said Mr. Hargood, patting her cheek lovingly; "I think we can listen to you quite contentedly just now."

May began by telling how, as a family, they had drawn Z into the society of the Rev. Mr. Worley, how that gentleman had treated his guests to wine, and Monroe Bailey had received his first glass from the hand of Lydia.

Mr. Hargood opened his eyes widely indeed, when his daughter told them that Z afterwards sought his pastor's advice, and was assured that Mr. Worley was a safe moral guide. She then raised her hand as if to command silence, and continued:

"We took our friend Z from his quiet retreat, and introduced him to the gentleman who has led him into all the questionable society he has ever met. He was induced to dance with Miss Lydia while Mr. Worley played. He again sought his pastor's advice, only to be reasurred that Mr. Worley was a safe moral guide. Thus he believes he has followed his pastor's advice in everything he has done. If we consider his downward career so objectionable, let us begin its reform aright, and ask God's forgiveness for the part we have taken in the matter."

"Amen," said her father, fervently.

"I have hardly finished," said May; "I wish to describe some of the efforts put forth to reclaim the wayward boy," Then she told of Mrs. Burley's conduct toward him and her rude speeches at the store, telling as nearly as possible her exact words. She put special emphasis on her harsh thrusts about his childhood home, and closed by saying: "This is the way we weigh in the balances. Now who is found wanting?"

Mrs. Burley presented an awkward appearance when the pastor turned a tear-stained face to her and said: "May God pardon us, dear sister! You made a grave mistake, but not more so than I. Let us pray."

Fervent prayers were offered, and the investigating committee adjourned.

## CHAPTER XIII.

# Retribution.

The next morning after the investigating committee met at the parsonage, a letter which was from Mr. Hargood was handed to Z, but he threw it into the bureau drawer unopened. He avoided all the members of his Church, and plunged into the gayest of society.

Several times his aunt sought to speak with him, but he also avoided her. Hitherto he had not been at any of the grand balls of the city. He had participated in the parlor dances in the homes where he visited, but could not persuade himself to enter the fashionable public ball-room. He sought spiritual advice from Mr. Worley, and soon we find him frequenting the parsonage on Lincoln Avenue as often as before, but always in company with Jollie Yarrow. Part of each evening there was spent in dancing.

Z did not meet his pastor for some time. Mr. Hargood considered silence on his part the best policy, and as his letter was unanswered he concluded to wait further developments.

Z met May several times; but after he had thanked her heartily for the interest she had taken

in him, they dismissed the subject, and met as if nothing unpleasant had occurred. He saw Monroe a few times, but they had conversed very little. Some two or three times he had assisted Nellie in getting her intoxicated brother home, by sending a carriage and driver with them. But she had said little to him, for she feared to burden him.

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There was to be a fashionable ball at Eagle Hall in the city, the first grand ball of the season, and Jollie Yarrow very much desired to go. Nevertheless she would not go unless Z went with her. He did not wish to go, but knew if he did not she would be greatly disappointed. He asked advice of Mr. Worley, who told him to go by all means, as he thought it would certainly do him no harm. Therefore he prepared to attend his first grand ball.

"It is just as Mr. Worley says," he answered his conscience. "It would be wrong in me to take from society its brightest star, only to grow dim under the routine of every-day life. So there is nothing left for me to do but to attend the ball. If my Church rejects me for it, I will join Mr. Worley's Church. He told me, just the other day, that he would be glad to receive me into his fold, and that he would not restrain innocent amusement."

At these last thoughts Z flushed crimson; for his conscience told him too plainly that the Tempter was leading him at will. However, he partially stifled conscience by classing many of the members of his Church with Mrs. Burley, and assuring himself that

those with whom he had been last associated were far better people.

On the evening of the grand ball he asked the privilege of having a drive with Jollie before the ball began. They rode out of the city toward the north, and passed Palmer Heights, viewing it in its grandeur, tinted by the golden twilight of a balmy autumn evening. They drove on past broad fields, brown after the harvest. Returning through the city, they were turning a corner in the street when a drunken man staggered out of a saloon and fell almost under the horse's feet. He was quickly grabbed by a policeman, and hurried away.

Z turned and said to Jollie:

"Such sights as this have determined me never to taste the intoxicating drug in any form. That is the reason for asking of you the promise never to taste wine again as long as you live."

"I consider my promise sacred, and will keep it," she replied. "However, I can not see as you do. Because some men will make brutes of themselves and go to these extremes, I can not see why others, who are able to control themselves, may not indulge a harmless appetite, and still not be stepping over the bounds of propriety. Is it because you fear I shall become a common drunkard that you obtained that promise from me?" she asked, laughing merrily.

"I fear nothing of the kind," said Z, quickly; "but I can not see the propriety of indulging in that which can but poison both soul and body, be it used in moderation or to excess."

"I can not think that way," replied Jollie; "I do not believe any one is hurt by drinking wine except the low and vulgar class, who could be but nothing under any circumstances."

"Who separates God's handiwork into classes but the Tempter?" asked Z, sadly. "God created men to be equal. But sin has wrought its work. Many who would grace any nation with an honored citizenship, but for the power of temptation, have fallen to the lowest depths, and the ruthless hand of caste has crowded them into the very mire of degradation. Therefore a Savior, who died for all alike, is grieved by the scorn which man thrusts at his fellow-man. I have seen those of the brightest intellect being dragged to the lowest possible depths by the drink demon, and then classed by their fellowmen as a lower order of creation."

"There, there, my temperance preacher," replied Jollie, playfully stroking Z's cheek, "please reserve that excellent sermon for your future pulpit, and let us talk on gayer themes to-night."

They drove across the long bridge to the westward of the city, and after driving for some time through a rural district were returning across the bridge, when Monroe Bailey staggered up to the carriage, which halted at his approach, and said in drunken accents: "Z again, as I live. I 'm dead broke again, police hunting me. Want t—to get home. Now could n't you give one a lift? Nellie, old girl, is sick,—could n't come aft—t— me this time."

Z assisted Monroe into the carriage beside him, and driving to a livery had the intoxicated young man taken home.

"This is another and more heart-rending reason for my objections to wine," said he after some silence. "Never was there a more brilliant prospect for self-wrought success than was presented by this same Monroe Bailey, and if I mistake not his ruin was started by the fair hand of woman. Lydia Worley and Geraldine Worthington are responsible for his first and second drinks of intoxicating liquors, and the drink demon of man's morbid nature could be trusted for the rest."

"Doubtless Monroe possessed weaknesses that could not be controlled," replied Jollie. "He might have fallen had he not been tempted in the way you speak of, as other opportunities would have presented themselves."

"That is why I take the grounds I do," answered Z. "Absolute prohibition of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors is the only safe way. I consider it the gravest sin that man can commit, to make merchandise of a fellow-man's weakness and accomplish his ruin for the love of gain."

"There goes my temperance preacher again, spoiling an excellent sermon by delivering it before the proper time," cried Jollie, laying her delicate hand on his lips.

Here they arrived at the hall; the team was dismissed, and the two went in together.

I will not here take the reader's time by attempt-

ing to describe the motley crowd that had gathered in the spacious hall. Suffice it to say it was a faithful counterpart of all other such gatherings; where the criminal who barely escapes justice stands on an equal footing with the purest person that can be induced to attend; where culture must find a level with vulgarity and depravity; where no pretense is made for the elevation of the worse, but where there is a certain power to degrade the better, until a common level is reached beneath the restraint of the purer sensibilities.

As the gayeties proceeded Z noticed with alarm that the most refined of the company were expected to mingle with the most vulgar on a common footing, and he saw the degrading influences of this society in very hideous light. He wondered that people who abhorred the degraded on all other occasions, and could not be induced to assist in efforts for their elevation for fear of tarnishing their own names or reputations, would mingle so freely with them in the dance, where their coarser nature asserted itself most.

Miss Yarrow, they said, had of late almost shut herself out of the pleasures of life, and was about to bind her future to the ambitions of a product of poverty, and to allow her brilliancy to expend itself on an object too low to appreciate her gifts. Now that she had once more come among the gay, it was thought proper to show joy at her return to real life, by every possible attention.

Z saw but little of her during the evening, only

as surrounded by admirers who beamed upon her their brightest smiles. He took part in the dance mechanically, but with no taste for its fascinations. He was many times begged to drink just one glass of wine, and many a fair hand raised the glass temptingly for him, as its owner begged him to drink with her to the success of his future hopes. But he told each one that he had taken a temperance pledge when but a small boy, which he considered as sacred as his mother's memory. This caused many a hollow laugh. The ball-room was not considered a suitable place for sacred memories or memories of any other nature worth mentioning.

The hours seemed long to Z, and he anticipated the time for departure with impatience. But one thing gave him comfort. Jollie was certainly enjoying herself, and it was for her sake that he had come. He felt that he could readily sacrifice his comfort for her pleasure.

The evening waned into the succeeding morning, and many of the most voluptuous were staggering under the weight of too much wine. Z was waltzing with one Miss Langan, a beauty thoroughly spoiled by society, when she said to him:

"My friend, you doubtless think that your future presents one gleam of hope without alloy; but I believe she whose heart you consider your own is at this moment pouring endearing words into the ears of another."

"Miss Langan," answered Z, quickly, "if you have nothing of a more fitting nature to communi-

cate to me, I consider absolute silence preferable to speech."

"O! Ah!" exclaimed Miss Langan, archly, "that is proper. Blind to all defects. Pardon my intrusion upon your happy state of mind. I assure you I will never repeat the offense. However, I should like to have a talk with you, and as I am tired of dancing, let us sit down awhile."

So saying, she placed a chair for Z near the approach of a large alcove, from which proceeded voices in conversation, and sat down near him. It was Jollie who was speaking, and Z could not help but hear.

"Mr. Cameron," she said, "I know very well that society will never understand my conduct, and I will not trust my destiny to the hollow opinions of its devotees. Every word you have said has been distasteful to me, and I must beg of you to say no more about my future."

"Well, well, little Miss Brilliant," answered Clarence Cameron. "I will say nothing more on the subject, but before you bury yourself entirely in obscurity please drink one glass of wine with me, to prove that you appreciate my interest in your future welfare, and in token that I pledge a never-dying wish for your happiness."

Z mechanically glanced through the drawn curtains as Jollie tremblingly raised the glass to her lips and drained its contents. He arose and placing his hand on his brow started for the other side of the hall. Miss Langan sprang to her feet, and followed

him, clinging to his arm and looking into his face with an amused smile.

Soon Jollie came out into the hall, and Z expressed a desire to go home. But she begged for one more waltz with him, saying in a chiding manner:

"I have seen but little of you all evening. Your time has surely been taken up by more congenial company than I."

Z placed a hand upon his brow again, and gazed at her a moment with a pained expression on his face. "Could this be one who would lightly break a solemn promise to gratify a morbid taste?" he said to himself. "Yes," and yet it was Jollie who in his eyes was the superior representative of all of Adam's race. But a pause here was awkward, as many eyes were turned upon him, endeavoring to read or misread his very thoughts. So he took Jollie's arm, and soon they were whirling through the changes of a giddy waltz.

They had taken but a whirl or two around the room, when all were startled by a loud, hoarse shout which came from the part of the hall that had been partitioned off for card-tables. They had not time to ascertain the source of the noise until March Carthurs sprang through the open door, and with oaths and curses fell prostrate on the floor in a drunken frenzy. A number of servants hurried the pride of society from the room, and to his own home. At this the dancing ceased and the revelers all proceeded homeward.

Z walked with Jollie to Ivy Bower, but was silent all the way. He could not comprehend his own thoughts; therefore he dared not give them expression. Jollie made up her mind that night never again to enter the ball-room, and several times essayed to tell Z; but he was so silent, and his thoughts seemed so far away that she concluded that he was thinking of Monroe Bailey, and she did not disturb his reverie. She said to herself, "I will tell him later of my resolve." And thus the words that would have given him supreme joy remained unspoken that night.

As they were parting at the gate of Ivy Bower, Jollie made an effort to communicate some of her thoughts to him by saying:

"I wish to tell you, that I abhor the sickening spectacle presented by March Carthurs to-night, and I am becoming more and more disgusted with the drink habit."

Z answered slowly and with bated breath:

"Ah, yes; but I perceive that the drink demon is no respecter of persons, for even the superior Miss Yarrow can break a sacred promise to satisfy his demands when made in the tempting poise of one of his most ardent devotees."

"O, how can I ever explain that terrible mistake to you?" exclaimed Jollie. "I can only plead forgetfulness, and I do beg your pardon."

Jollie looked the picture of utter regret, and Z replied hastily but tenderly:

"No, no, it is I who need to ask pardon. I should

never have pledged you to what was hard to keep. Believe me, I will never do so again."

With this, Z bade Jollie good-night, and was soon in his own room, where he threw himself on the couch, and fell asleep, despite his troubled state of mind.

He arose in the morning ill at ease, and hardly fit for duty. He entered into business with a determination to drown thought in action, and he was partially successful. But as the evening drew near he dreaded the quiet of his own room, for he knew that solitude would invite reflection.

"I will have it out with my conscience to-night," he said at last. "'He that conquereth himself is greater than he that taketh a city.' Yes," he said, "'and a fiercer struggle he hath,' might have been added to these words."

Once in his own room he looked resolutely at his reflection in the mirror, and said:

"I will pray, though prayer and I have nearly become strangers since I first met Mr. Worley."

Here again the Tempter strove to get the boy's mind from himself as the real cause of his downfall, and allow him to blame others.

He fell on his knees and tried to pray, but his own voice seemed to mock him, and the heavens gave no response to his cry. He realized that there was a barrier between him and his God, as there had not been before. He soon arose, and looked about him in a puzzled manner, wondering what could be the matter. On the bureau was a picture of Jollie

beside that of his sister Lulu. Jollie had arranged them in a neat frame, and placed them there, saying that the two could keep vigils over the object of her love. He looked at the picture of Jollie as if he would read her soul from the portrait, and said to himself:

"The best of earth can break a solemn promise for a mere trifle of sociability. Then why should I trammel my soul with such prescribed rules of conduct? Can I hope to be better than she? No, I know her to be my superior in every way."

He looked fondly at the smiling face of Lulu in the picture, and wondered if she would not have done as Jollie did under like circumstances. Then he laughed at his alarm, and commanded himself to be more quiet. Somehow the lines of the Scotch poet came to his mind, and he said:

"Yes, that is it; I have found fault with others and have been blind to my own faults. O, to see myself as others see me! Yes, even to see myself as Thou seest me, O my Father in Heaven!" he cried, almost with a wail.

A vision of his conduct for the past year or two came up before him in a very hideous light, and he exclaimed:

"I would gladly return to my couch in the fair-ground to-night, if that would bring me back the peace of mind I then enjoyed."

Again he knelt in prayer; this time in tears of penitence. But again he rose without comfort. His mother's word came back to him with force. She

had said, "Sow not your wild oats, my son, or you will reap them in bitter tears of repentance or in endless remorse."

He stood before the window, and gazed up at the silent stars. "O God," he cried, "restore unto me the joys of Thy salvation, and I will forsake all and follow Thee."

Just then the door-bell gave a sharp ring, and when he opened the door William Yarrow stepped into the room. His eyes flashed with anger as he handed to Z an open letter and cried, "Read that!"

Z took the letter, and glancing at the heading offered it back to him, saying, "This is not my property, and I do not care to read it."

"Read it," retorted William, "I assure you it was because I could not quietly see a fellow mortal so grossly wronged as you have been that I dared to tarnish the family name by furnishing the intelligence which this letter carries. Read it, I say," he continued, impatiently.

Z then read the letter.

"My dear Miss Yarrow," it ran, "I consider your promise to me quite binding; and in token of my unfailing faith in your devotion to me—regardless of rumors to the contrary—I send to you a *diamond* ring, which will seal our engagement until my return, when I hope to make you the honored sharer of my fortunes. MATTHEW GARLAND."

Z looked up with a puzzled expression on his face. He had seen Matthew Garland a number of

times, knew him to be a wealthy nabob of advanced years, but nothing further about him. William eyed Z all this time with a smile of satisfaction, and finally said:

"If I mistake not, she whom you call your queen of hearts is at this moment wearing that same ring with an ecstasy of prospective joy, when she shall have awakened you from your blissful summer dream, cast you back to the level of your birthright, and herself shall have risen to the dignity of the honors proffered by Matthew Garland. If I were in your place," he resumed, "I would leave the country on the early morning train, and show them a trick worth two of theirs."

With this William Yarrow left the room, and Z again knelt and prayed for divine guidance. In a few moments he arose, and making hasty preparations to leave the house, started for the home of Mr. Hargood.

The pastor was just preparing for family worship, when Z threw open the door without knocking, rushed into the room, and falling on his knees at the pastor's feet, looked up into his face exclaiming:

"O pastor, forgive me. And can you plead with God for a poor, penitent backslider's pardon?"

Mr. Hargood knelt before the boy, and clasping the upraised hands in his said:

"My dear friend, I humbly beg your forgiveness for having blindly misguided you when you sought my advice."

George Whitefield, who was calling on the pas-

tor, also knelt beside Z; and twining his arms around him whispered:

"Dear friend, God is not so far away as you think. The Tempter may have led you into trouble, but God says, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'"

Mrs. Hargood was the first to raise her voice in prayer, and she was followed by Mr. Hargood, then May, and finally George Whitefield.

When they arose from their knees, Z smiled through his tears and said:

"I believe that God is leading me, and that He will soon restore to me the joys of salvation. But one thing more I must do to-night. I must go to my aunt and crave her pardon for the neglect of which I have been guilty."

In vain his friends pleaded the lateness of the hour. He would go then. In a few minutes he was driving rapidly over the road toward the home of his aunt.

We will leave Z on his journey for the present, and visit Ivy Bower the same evening, but a little earlier.

At the birthday party William Yarrow was introduced to Edith Caldwell, and he took a great fancy to her. Therefore he determined to win her favor. Edith was a frank and innocent girl, and when she heard disparaging rumors of William, she immediately went to his sister and demanded the truth, which Jollie reluctantly gave. This threw William into a great rage, and he resolved revenge

upon his innocent sister for speaking the words which honesty demanded.

Mrs. Yarrow had been silently plotting to yet secure her daughter's betrothal to a wealthy worthy, and thus rescue her from the ties which were so distasteful to the mother. Accordingly she had written to Matthew Garland and confided to him her desires. That is why that worthy gentleman wrote the letter.

The family were all seated around the fire when the postman brought to Mrs. Yarrow the expected important letter, with the one for Jollie inclosed. As Mrs. Yarrow read, she assumed a dignified air, and, handing to Jollie the part intended for her, said haughtily: "I can hardly think that a daughter of mine would be guilty of a breach of promise." With this Mrs. Yarrow lapsed into a dignified silence, and eyed her daughter coldly as she read the letter.

Jollie turned very pale as she read the contents of the letter, and tearing off the wrapper from the ring she threw it across the room in utter disgust, and flung the letter from her as if it were poison.

"O mother," she exclaimed, "how could you be so cruel? You know I never favored Mr. Garland's attentions in the least, and the only ground either of you have for this extraordinary claim is, that when he asked me to allow him to hope for favors in the future, I indignantly told him that if hope would give him comfort he might hope on to the end of time, if he would trouble me no more."

Here Mr. Yarrow addressed his wife, saying:

"I will see to answering that extraordinary letter myself. So you need trouble yourself no more about it."

Mrs. Yarrow suddenly arose and sought her own room. William picked up the letter that Jollie had thrown so contemptuously away. "Now is my time," he said; "revenge is sweet."

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Mrs. Bailey received Z cordially. Monroe felt the effects of his last night's revel, and was slumbering soundly. Nellie was lying on a bed, prostrated by a severe cough, and her mother was watching beside her.

"Dear aunt," said Z, "I come, a poor penitent, craving pardon for my neglect of you. Although you find me weighed in the balances and found wanting, I humbly beg of you to pray that the joys of salvation may be restored to me as in former days."

Mrs. Bailey explained to him that she had said that, if weighed in the balances of human judgment he might be found wanting, as would all others, and her words had been misunderstood.

At Z's request Mrs. Bailey prayed earnestly for his restoration to the favor of God, and the boy arose somewhat comforted. However, he did not grasp present saving faith in the Lord Jesus, and only hoped for pardon in the future.

His mission ended, he prepared to go home. As he bade his aunt good-bye, he placed a roll of bills in her hands, saying:

"These will supply your present needs. I will

send a doctor for Nellie in the morning, and we can plan for the future afterwards. Meantime, dear aunt, and sweet Nellie, do not cease to pray for your wayward relative."

Nellie clasped his hand, and said fervently:

"May God abundantly bless my noble cousin, and may his happiness be untarnished by any sorrow!"

"I may never be happy again," said Z, quietly, and they seemed to understand his meaning. No further words were spoken, but they clung to him in a fond, parting embrace.

When Z left the house, Mrs. Bailey again prayed earnestly to God for guidance of the boy so dear to her. Z was also in fervent prayer as he drove homeward. At times he thought he would follow William Yarrow's advice, and leave the country on the early morning train. But he said to himself at last:

"No, I will not steal away as a culprit. Although I may have to seek another country and begin life's battles anew, I will take my leave of this place properly."

Just then these words from the Bible came to his mind: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." "Yes, yes; that is it," he said, "I am unfit to grapple with the affairs of life unaided by the Spirit of God. I will dismiss for the present every other thought but that of my soul's need." Again he prayed, "Restore unto me the joys of Thy salvation, O God." Then he began to sing, but every word was a prayer. He sang more and more

lustily, striving to waft the petition of his burdened heart to God on the wings of this soul-inspiring song:

"Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole,
I want Thee forever to live in my soul.
Break down every idol, cast out every foe;
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

"To think," he said, "that I should have blamed others for my downfall when I am guilty of so many shortcomings, when I am so extremely selfish as not to rejoice in the happiness of others, even if it be at the expense of my fondest hopes."

But hark! Whence comes that plaintive song, murmuring on the quiet breezes of the night? At first it seemed to mingle with the sighing of the wind, and Z's heart almost stood still as he said, "Surely that is the voice of my mother singing her favorite hymn." The voice sounded nearer, and he heard these words:

"The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow,
For I will be with thee thy trials to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress."

Z stopped his team, and was listening with every fiber of his being awake, intent on hearing every syllable. The song came from a wayside cottage, where an anxious mother watched by the side of her sick child, and waited the return of the husband and father, who tarried at the licensed saloon. Sing on, sad singer! You thought only to find solace for your own aching heart in song; but the free winds

of heaven are wafting the music to another burdened soul. The song continued:

> "When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie
> My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply;
> The flames shall not hurt thee, I only design
> Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine."

"O Father in heaven," cried Z, "have mercy on me a sinner! Let the refining fires of Thy love go through my soul and consume all the dross of pride and selfishness!"

Swifter than an arrow came the still, small voice of God saying, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." The burden fell from the boy's heart, and floods of heavenly sunlight filled his soul. That midnight journey was no more lonely; for the straying sheep had been found by the loving Shepherd.

William Yarrow watched Z that night, and concluded, with a chuckle of satisfaction, that the boy was taking his advice and would be gone in the morning. Therefore he was chagrined to see him the next morning at his old place in the store, smiling and happy.

Z determined to think of nothing but his new-found joy, and was in a transport of peace all the forenoon.

In the afternoon Mr. Yarrow called at the store, and met Z with a hearty shake of the hand saying, "My daughter and I wish to be entertained by you in your own home this evening." Z wondered what it all could mean, but he patiently waited to see.

With the evening came the expected guests to

Z's room, and, after everything was satisfactorily explained, a suitable reply to Mr. Garland's letter was written.

Jollie told Z that she had fully made up her mind never again to enter the ball-room, and to shun all forms of questionable amusement. Before they went home she also told him that she would attend his own Church with him the next Sabbath. Z's joy during the rest of the week can more easily be imagined than described.

On the next Sabbath morning the worshipers were nearly all assembled in the church of the Rev. Mr. Hargood. The choir were in their places, when Jollie and Z came into the church, and sat down in a front pew. May Hargood, who was the organist, whispered to Ella Fulton, the leading soprano: "There, that wayward brother of mine has outdone even his own waywardness by bringing in a musician to hear my awkward playing. I have a mind to go and pull his ears for it right now." But the pastor announced the opening hymn, and they all sang,—

> "I know that my Redeemer lives
> And has prepared a place for me."

Although all sang, the clear voice of Ella Fulton was heard distinctly in all the house. The rich contralto of Jollie Yarrow blended in beautiful harmony with the soprano, and all turned to see the new singer.

Mr. Hargood offered an earnest prayer and preached eloquently from the text, "The law of the

spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. viii, 2.)

It was pronounced by all an excellent sermon; but to Jollie it presented the Gospel in a new light, which satisfied the longings of her soul, and she was filled with new light.

When the closing hymn was sung, the pastor gave an opportunity for any one who wished to unite with the Church. They sang,—

> "When peace like a river attendeth my way,
> When sorrows like sea-billows roll,
> Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
> It is well, it is well with my soul."

The contralo voice rang out clearly at first, then wavered and entirely ceased, as Jollie, pale and trembling, stepped forward, placing her small white hand in the hand of the minister, and gave her name to the Church. The members crowded forward to give her the right hand of fellowship,—all except Mrs. Burley, who stalked out of the house in utter disgust.

Z came after all the rest had bidden God-speed, and led Jollie from the altar and the church, too much overwhelmed with joy to wait for the benediction.

## CHAPTER XIV.

# Rescued With a Price.

Mrs. Bailey suffered greatly from the shock received when she learned of her son's downfall. The boy had successfully concealed his career from his mother until the crisis came. However, she had suspected that all was not right. He had given her little of his wages, and she and Nellie were obliged to support the family by the needle-work which they obtained from the store. She several times desired to speak with Z, in order to enlist him in ascertaining what was going wrong with her boy, but he had shunned her. So she was unable to learn anything about Monroe until the news of his downfall reached her. She resolved to keep her son at home, and try to support the family by her own earnings, assisted by Nellie, who labored diligently though her health was rapidly failing.

Monroe would frequently steal away from home, and come to the city to obtain the drinks which his morbid appetite craved. He was always followed by his devoted sister Nellie, who would seek him until she found him, although she was often obliged to go into the vilest kind of saloons.

Monroe dearly loved his sister, and would allow

her to lead him home. Often they were seen walking along the road together, when the girl was scarcely able to make the journey. Nellie always was of delicate constitution; finally her strength gave way, and she was confined to her bed. Z sent a doctor for her the morning after he visited them, and Monroe watched tenderly beside her during her illness. He promised her that he would reform, and with her regaining health she was happy in this hope. Z now gave financial aid to his aunt, and everything seemed to promise better for them. Monroe secured a position on a neighboring farm. He began again with firm resolution to fight life's battles manfully, and be victor over the drink demon that had come so near being his destruction.

Time passed and autumn came again, with its chilling rains and fitful gusts of wind. Monroe had worked hard all week, and, as it was Saturday evening, was returning home to enjoy a rest with loved ones. He held in his hand the wages of the past week, and hurried on toward home. His breath came quick and fast as an insatiable appetite struggled with him for mastery. At times he would stop and look longingly toward the city. Then he would set his teeth firmly together and start on toward home. He came to a cross-road just as a carriage drove up, and a well-known voice called to him. It was one of his former associates, and he began to talk to him in a familiar manner.

"I have not seen you for some time, old boy," he said. "Did not learn whether you had quit the

furniture store or not. Come, I am going to the city, and would like to have you ride with me."

Monroe hesitated but a moment, for the appetite fiercely impelled him. He climbed into the carriage and was driven rapidly to the place of his temptation.

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On this same evening Jollie was waiting at the drygoods store for Z to complete his task. She had an errand which she wished him to assist her in performing. There was a sick woman living in the suburbs of the city, whom Jollie wished to visit and also to aid, as the family were very poor. Z's work was at last finished, and the two were soon at the house of the sick woman, with delicacies for her.

Their mission being accomplished, after offering words of comfort and cheer and receiving in return many fervent God-bless-you's from the sick woman, they started homeward. The wind had risen, and the chilling rain was rapidly falling.

"I am very sorry," said Z, "that you ventured out on such a night as this. I fear you will be ill."

"You would not deny me the pleasure of this hour, would you?" she replied, gleefully. "Although it may have cost some sacrifice, I assure you the blessing I have received is worth more than all the comforts which ease can bestow."

The storm grew in fierceness and strength. It was all they could do to shelter under a large umbrella and keep their cloaks wrapped about them. They were hastening along in gay conversation when they saw before them a figure showing dimly in the

reflection of a distant lamp. As they neared the figure they saw that it tottered as it moved, and finally clutched the fence to keep from falling. Their surprise was great when they saw that it was a woman. A fit of coughing seized her. They stopped beside her, and found that it was little Nellie Bailey. She had come out as usual in search of her wayward brother; the storm had overtaken her, and she was completely exhausted by struggling to keep on despite the fury of the storm.

"Nellie," exclaimed Z, "how came you out in such a storm as this?"

"My dear brother," gasped Nellie; "he needs me—"

She could say no more for coughing.

"What can be done for the poor girl?" exclaimed Jollie. "There is no team near, and she can not walk to our house."

"I could easily carry her to Mrs. Doyle's," said Z; "but how could you get home?"

"O, never mind me," cried Jollie, quickly; "I will help you take care of the dear girl. She has ventured so much for the love of her brother."

Z lifted Nellie tenderly in his arms, and Jollie wrapped her own cloak around the suffering girl. They went on as rapidly as they could, Jollie holding the umbrella so as to shield Nellie as much as possible. After a toilsome journey, they arrived at Mrs. Doyle's boarding-house.

A messenger boy was sent to Ivy Bower to tell them that Jollie would not return that night, and Z

went for a doctor, and to find Monroe. Meanwhile Jollie and Mrs. Doyle made it as comfortable as possible for the sick girl.

Z soon found a doctor, and then went in search of Monroe. After a long and perplexing search through almost all the saloons in the city, Monroe was found in an intoxicated state in one of the low grogshops. He stoutly resisted Z's efforts to induce him to go, until Z said:

"Monroe, have you no heart left? Nellie has sought you through the storm of this dreadful night. The task was too great for her strength, and she is doubtless now dying from her efforts to save you."

Monroe staggered to his feet, a death-like pallor on his face as he exclaimed:

"My darling Nellie! Where is she?"

"Come," said Z, "I will lead you to her."

Monroe, partially sobered by the shock, grasped his cousin's arm, and the two started for Mrs. Doyle's. The doctor was still sitting by Nellie when the boys arrived. Mrs. Doyle had arranged the sick girl as comfortably as possible, and Jollie's clothing having been drenched with the rain, she had donned one of Mrs. Doyle's dresses much too large for her, for that lady was a very corpulent woman. In spite of Z's anxiety about his cousin he could not help smiling at Jollie as she sat, looking as if attired for a callithumpian parade. Jollie smiled also, and Z thought she would look handsome in any costume.

Monroe, utterly cast down, knelt by the bedside of his sister, and could not speak a word. Nellie

stroked his dark hair affectionately, and whispered, "My dear brother, I am so glad you have come."

The doctor arose, and donning his great coat, said: "A serious case of pneumonia, I fear; and with the young lady's former state of health to contend with, the issue is doubtful."

Monroe again staggered to his feet, and grasping the doctor's hand exclaimed frantically: "O doctor, doctor! save her, save her!"

"I will do all in my power," replied the doctor, sadly, "but there are cases beyond human aid, and mistakes are sometimes made for which earth has no remedy."

"O, tell me," cried Monroe, "have I murdered my—my own darling sister?"

"Dear brother," whispered Nellie, "all is well with me."

"The only thing left for you to do, young man," said the doctor, "is to keep as still as possible; do your part as nurse for the dear girl, and we will hope for the best."

With this remark the doctor left the room, promising to be back in the morning, and Monroe sat down by the bedside of Nellie, looking the picture of utter despair.

Jollie tenderly raised the head of the sufferer, at each paroxysm of coughing, and smoothed the pillow with the loving care that is such a comfort in a sick-room.

In the morning Jollie secured a trained nurse for the sick girl, and, with a promise to call often,

went home. Z sent for his aunt, and returned to the store. Monroe took his station beside his sister, and could scarcely be induced to leave her long enough to take his meals. Mrs. Bailey made arrangements for the care of the rest of the family during her absence, and prepared to stay with her daughter during her illness.

The next evening the mother was sitting beside Nellie. The nurse had gone to secure something for the comfort of the sick girl, and Monroe was sitting by the bedside with his head resting on the bed in sleep.

"I wish you could see the beautiful lady that watched beside me last night," whispered Nellie to her mother. "Somehow I knew she was Miss Yarrow. I heard no one say so; but I never before saw one whom I deemed worthy of my dear cousin."

"You are over-fond of your cousin," replied Mrs. Bailey: "but he is certainly worthy of your affections. However, I can not think that Miss Yarrow, of Ivy Bower, would leave her home to come and watch by my Nellie's bedside."

"O mother," replied Nellie, "the lady I saw last night had the face of one that knew no such thing as worldly distinction, and would do a kindness to any one regardless of station in life."

Just then the door opened quietly, and Jollie and Z stepped into the room. Jollie went to the bedside and pressed a kiss on the fevered brow of Nellie, saying, "How is my sweet patient to-night?" Z then introduced Jollie to his aunt, who put her arm around the girl, and said, affectionately, "If my

daughter is correct in her estimation of you, I can safely intrust the affections of my beloved nephew to your care."

The doctor then came for the second time that day. He looked critically at the sick girl, shook his head doubtfully, and, after leaving some careful directions, retired.

Thus the days and nights passed in the sick-room, Nellie sometimes tossing on her bed deliriously as the fever ran highest, and becoming calm again as the fever subsided. Mrs. Bailey, Monroe, and the nurse kept constant vigil by the bedside. The careful doctor called often to watch the progress of the disease, and Jollie and Z called as often as opportunity permitted, always bringing something to cheer the sufferer.

Nellie gradually grew weaker, until the hopes of her loved ones waned, and they looked forward with dread to the inevitable. Just a week had passed since Nellie was brought to Mrs. Doyle's boarding-house, and a number of her loved ones were gathered in her sick-room. Mrs. Bailey sat, holding her daughter's hand, and Jollie and Z were standing beside her. On the other side of the bed stood Monroe, speechless with sorrow, and his younger brother and sisters stood beside him. They had been brought to the city to speak to their sister for the last time on earth. The doctor and the nurse stood at the foot of the bed.

"It will all be over soon," whispered the doctor as Nellie's labored breathing grew shorter and shorter.

Presently the dying girl opened her eyes and said, "I am going now. Dear cousins," she continued, extending both her hands to Jollie and Z, who eagerly clasped them, "Nellie's last prayer is that you will always be happy. Dear children," she said, turning to the younger members of the family, "strive to meet your sister in heaven." Then taking the hand of Monroe, she placed it in her mother's hand, and laying her own upon them as they clasped she said, "Dear mother, I bequeath to you the strong hand of my precious brother, who, faith tells me, will reform from this hour. I gladly give up my poor frail life for his rescue, as he can be far more to my mother than I could ever hope to be."

"Sister," exclaimed Monroe, brokenly, "I will reform for your dear sake."

"With the help of Jesus," said Z, fervently.

"Lord Jesus, help me; Thou wilt help me," pleaded Monroe, earnestly.

"Yes, dear brother, He will help you," whispered Nellie. With strong effort she cleared her throat and said, "Farewell, beloved, till we meet again."

The sweet face wreathed in smiles, and the spirit departed from a world of sorrow.

Under the burden of an unspeakable grief, Monroe arose, by the help of Jesus, a rescued man, but at the price of one loving heart forever stilled, one musical voice forever hushed to earth, and one vacant seat at the home hearth; a price that left an aching void, never to be filled in this world.

## CHAPTER XV.

# The Pearly Gates Swing Open.

On the following Monday the mortal remains of sweet Nellie Bailey were laid in the country churchyard by her father's side, and one more victim was added to the list of rum's innocent slain. But the laws declared the act to be legal, and the licensed saloon still flourished under the garb of respectability.

Men said, "What a shame that a pure young girl should be thus cruelly murdered only because of her tender sisterly love!" However, the majority agreed that such things were necessary in order to enhance the public good by the blood-money obtained from legalizing this kind of murder. And the saloon, by the voice of the people, sought other like victims.

Jollie and Z attended the funeral of Nellie together. As they were returning that evening, Jollie laid her hand on the arm of her companion and said:

"I see it all plainly as you do, why we should wage a constant warfare against the drink demon. His victims are many, and among them are even the purest and best. Earth never knew a truer sister heart than that of little Nellie. Yet she was foully murdered, only because she was prompted by one of earth's noblest emotions, sister-love. At her grave I promised a life's devotion to the cause of temper-

ance, and, be my days few or many, my highest ambition will be to use them as your helper, to do all we can against the traffic, which you have always hated. I can not see how you ever bore with my ignorance while endeavoring to teach me the truth as I see it now."

The remainder of the conversation during that ride home from Nellie's funeral must be left sacred to the participants. Suffice it to say that two young lives were consecrated anew to God to battle earnestly for the cause of right.

Mrs. Bailey, in her new, great sorrow, did not forget that she had life's duties yet to perform. So she set herself faithfully to the task of guiding her penitent boy aright. She reverently pointed him to the Savior of the world as the only refuge from the temptations of life, and before the next Sabbath Monroe found peace in the Savior's love.

At the next Sabbath's services he gave his hand to the Church, and started out as an earnest follower of Christ. In this way we could expect his success as a man rescued from the jaws of eternal death. He applied himself devotedly to the duties of life, resolving to make his mother as happy as possible, and always doing with his might whatever his hands found to do that was honorable and right. In this his mother had reason to rejoice, though her sorrows were many.

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A few weeks later the family at Ivy Bower were all seated around the fire, and Z was one of the

circle. Matthew Garland had written a very haughty reply to Jollie's letter, in which he set forth the importance of the station in life to which he wished to raise her. He closed by saying:

"This dignity is yours for the acceptance of it; but I can not thrust it upon you. Therefore reflect upon its advantages, and be induced to change your mind."

Mrs. Yarrow's pride had been so severely wounded by this letter that she discarded Matthew Garland with contempt. She lived much in her novels, and Mr. Yarrow had purposely selected several books in which the heroes had risen from very humble stations, and had placed them in her reach. This had worked a wonderful change in her estimation of Z and she saw a bright prospect for him in the future. Said she:

"My daughter's station in life is equal to that of Garland himself, and I will see to it that our dear children far overreach him in importance to society."

So she entered into her husband's plans with a surprising zeal. She earnestly besought her husband to purchase, in his daughter's name, a half interest in Mr. Coupland's flourishing business, and thereby start the dear children aright. But Mr. Yarrow thought differently. He said to them:

"I want to see you start humbly, and win success by your own efforts. Then future prosperity will be properly valued by you, and your fortune will be made a blessing to you and not a curse, as too often

happens. I will make you a present of a home, and then I wish you to live by your own energies. See how much you can save from year to year, and in this way learn economy, which is the secret of success."

"I assure you," replied Jollie, "that it will afford me great pleasure to practice economy, and thereby be doing something worth living for."

"I wish for earth's richest gifts to lay at your feet," whispered Z to her, "and it will be my highest ambition to grant your every wish."

"I must soon go away on business," said Mr. Yarrow, "so let us now arrange the home, and you can settle down to business at once."

"My daughter," he said to Jollie, "you may choose your home among the different resident properties which I own in the city; so speak your wish now, my jewel," he continued, caressing Jollie's curls.

"You are extremely kind, my father," she replied, "and if that be your wish, I would like the little white cottage on Arbor Street near my present home."

"Pooh!" exclaimed William, "that's another specimen of your lofty ambitions, to ignore such a number of splendid residences and choose that miserable little dove-cot. For my part I should have chosen the best of them."

"Thank you, brother mine," exclaimed Jollie, gleefully, "I shall always be proud of the name you have given to my sweet home, and henceforth the

little white cottage under the elm on Arbor Street will be known as the dove-cot."

"You shall occupy no such residence," said Mrs. Yarrow, contemptuously; "what would Garland say to such humility as that?"

"Mr. Garland's empty opinions are hardly worth taking into consideration when matters of so much moment are concerned," replied Jollie, calmly.

"My daughter is wise indeed," exclaimed Mr. Yarrow, proudly. "It shall be as she wishes, for I can trust her judgment entirely in the matter."

After much talk and planning, Z sought his own abode, and the conference adjourned for the night.

A few days after this, Mr. Yarrow was in the store conversing with Mr. Coupland in a low tone, and the words we did not hear. Finally he came over to Z and said to him:

"We wish you to dine with us this evening, but you are to call at the dove-cot on your way. My daughter and I will be there. She wishes to welcome you there in the same manner that she expects to every evening in the near future."

At this, Mr. Yarrow smiled pleasantly, and left the room.

Mr. Coupland came and eyed Z critically for some time. Then he said with a chuckle: "Well, well, you are quiet enough; but you have business qualities which surprise me. You have certainly shown superior business tact by capturing the beautiful heiress, of whom any man might be proud, and whose future prospects are very flattering indeed.

You can have as much time as you like for the present, and when you are the most prosperous, remember me as your friend."

Z blushed crimson at this coarse speech, but did not trust himself to answer. Mr. Coupland continued:

"Mr. Yarrow has confided in me your future hopes, and I will not expect further service from you after dinner this evening. Accept my congratulations and best wishes for your future happiness." With this remark he strode away, chuckling to himself, and saying, "He 'll do, he 'll certainly do."

That evening as Z neared the dove-cot, Jollie stood waiting to receive him. She was dressed in a most becoming gown, and had studied a form of greeting to please him. As he approached she extended her hand and said, smiling mischievously, "Welcome, dear husband, welcome home."

Z blushed crimson, but without replying he clasped her extended hand in both his own, and the two went into the house, where they met Mr. Yarrow, who took great pleasure in planning with them for the furnishing of the house, so soon to be their home.

"Dear children," said Mr. Yarrow, "let nothing mar the picture of a perfect home I have painted in my imagination. It is my highest ambition to see you as happy here as I had wished to be."

After viewing the house to their satisfaction, they started for Ivy Bower. As they crossed the

threshold Jollie clasped Z's arm, and looking up proudly into his eyes said:

"Just a little more than a fortnight, and this will be our own sweet home. My chief ambition will be to make it a veritable Eden for you."

Z could answer only with a look of unspeakable gratitude, and the three moved on in silence.

We will leave further incidents of these happy days of preparation to the imagination of our readers and advance a little in our story.

During the past few days a dreaded epidemic had come to the city and it was quarantined; Z stood in his usual place at the store, but business was very dull. He was dreaming day-dreams, and revolving the possibilities of the future in his mind, when Sarah, a maid from Ivy Bower, stepped into the store and spoke to him in a low tone, saying:

"Miss Jollie told me to call and tell you that it was not best for you to come to Ivy Bower this evening. She is somewhat ill and thought it best not to write to you."

There was that in Sarah's manner which told Z more than she suspected, and he asked hastily:

"Can it be that Jollie is taking the fever?"

Sarah stood staring at him, but did not answer.

"Woman, why do n't you speak?" he exclaimed, impatiently.

At last she said: "We fear she is. But she told me to persuade you not to come to Ivy Bower to-night without causing you to suspect the reason."

Z hastily took leave of absence from the store,

telling Mr. Coupland not to look for him soon, and went immediately to Ivy Bower. They endeavored to keep him from the house and the sick-room, but to no avail. He was soon sitting beside Jollie, who was lying on a bed, tossing in a fever of that dreaded epidemic.

Jollie stared at him a moment, and then extending a fevered hand smiled as she said deliriously:

"Welcome, dear husband, welcome to our own sweet home."

Z grasped the extended hand, and holding it fondly in his own, buried his face in the pillow and wept. Finally he grew more calm. Raising his head he began to caress Jollie's fevered brow, and soon she was sleeping quietly. He sat beside her, still, and clasping her hand. Once she partially aroused, and said softly, "It will be my chief ambition to make this a veritable Eden for you." Tears coursed down the cheeks of Z, and Mr. and Mrs. Yarrow, who had been dumb with sorrow, wept aloud. Finally the sick girl awoke and seemed rested and calmed. She looked at Z a moment in wonderment, and then said:

"How came you here when I had strictly forbidden you to approach the house? I am very sorry that you have unnecessarily exposed yourself on my account. Yet the hours would have been long without you," she continued, with a radiant smile.

"Did you think I would be cowardly enough to stay away from you while you suffered?" asked Z, fondly. "If I should be," he added, "I certainly

would be unworthy of the affections of such a woman."

"As you have come," she replied, "let it be for a purpose. I want you to kneel by my bedside and pray to God that I may be completely resigned to His will. I do not fear whatever may befall me, but I desire to feel that God's will is best for us all."

Z rose to his feet and pressed both hands to his brow. The room seemed to reel around him. How could he utter such a sentence in prayer? Jollie said coaxingly:

"Please pray for me. It will do you good as well as comfort me."

At last he knelt beside the bed, and attempted to pray, but it seemed that his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. He trembled like one in a chill, while the perspiration gathered on her brow. With a supreme effort he mastered himself sufficiently to give utterance to a few sentences in prayer, and arose more calm.

Thus through the weary days and nights that followed, Z kept constant vigil by Jollie's bedside. At times she would be quite rational, and would give her watchers many comforting words; but in delirium she lived in the future happy life that she had pictured for herself in this world, and Z heard many desires expressed which caused the blood to course warmly through his heart, and made him utter more fervently the burdened prayer of his soul that she might be spared to the realization of these hopes.

One day she awoke to full consciousness, and after caressing Z's hand for some time in silence, she said:

"My poor, dear boy, I want you to be calm while I speak to you. First of all, I want you to promise me that you will strive to make your life a success in God's name, and a blessing to your fellow-men, that you will endeavor to make the remembrance of me a blessing to you, and that you will not be sad for having met me.

"I could long to live if it were but to make your life one continual ray of sunshine. However, this can not be. Therefore remember me as the light of one happy dream that is to be reflected upon only as a pleasure, and not as a cause of sorrow. You will find much to do in after life that will require the exercise of all your manly powers. Fight the drink demon with all the energy of your soul. Portray to all the degradation accompanying the dance, which has polluted so many lives; and endeavor to break down the false barriers which society, so-called, has reared against the proper exercise of the nobler virtues of mankind. I know I must soon leave you, but, in the years that are to come, God may provide you a more worthy helper than I could ever be."

Z had risen, and was looking her full in the face as she said this. He tried to answer, but he could not utter a word. His face was ashen pale as he gazed at her a moment and then turned and staggered out of the room. Unconsciously he wended

his way to the rustic seat where he sat when Jollie wove the garland of roses and placed it on his brow.

The autumn storms had subsided, and the sky was clear. The gentle breezes were whirling the leaves of crimson and gold from their native branches, and strewing them over the ground. A bird flew to a branch overhead and piped a melody to the murmuring winds, every note falling on Z's ear like a dirge from a land of unspeakable sorrow. He knelt beside the seat and tried to pray, but the Tempter whispered, "It is a vain thing to serve the Lord."

Z said to himself: "Has not the Bible said, 'If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it?' Have I not pleaded heart-brokenly for the life of my precious Jollie, and yet the heavens are silent to my prayers?"

It is hard for the Christian to understand that many of his fondest wishes can not be granted, and many a coveted prize must be withheld in love by the beneficent All-wise Father, who seeth not as man seeth. O that suffering man could learn to rest a broken heart in the wounds of a crucified and risen Redeemer, and assuage sorrow by the life-blood of His loving heart, that always beats a response to human sorrow! Then would trials be lighter, and cares less burdensome.

Z arose but little comforted; for the Tempter was endeavoring to multiply his sorrows, and he stopped to listen to his subtle words. When he returned to the house, Jollie was again delirious. The

disease was rapidly undermining her remaining strength. Through the rest of the day and the succeeding night she was either delirious, or remained in a stupor that was almost death itself.

Once on the following morning she aroused enough to pronounce a blessing on the loved ones, who watched beside her, and then again lasped into unconsciousness.

Z, more like a statue than a living being, sat beside her through the long night and the following day. The day was cloudless, and the air was still and balmy as the breath of spring. Just as the sun seemed to touch the western horizon Jollie partly raised herself, and spoke in a clear, calm voice, saying:

"Dear ones, are you all here? I must bid you farewell. Do not weep," she said, as they gathered around her bed; "sing songs of gladness, for all is bright and beautiful beyond. Dear boy," she said to Z, "can you not raise your eyes from earth's sorrows, and see the Pearly Gates as they swing open to receive me?"

She laid her head fondly on Z's shoulder. Her face became radiant with a transport of heaven-born joy as she clasped one arm around the neck of the heart-broken boy, and raised the other hand as if to welcome a personage unseen to the others.

The free winds of heaven played through the open window, fanning the throbbing brow of the boy, and toying with his golden curls. The same breezes fanned the marble brow, resting on his

shoulder now growing cold in death. The murmuring winds again mingled the curls of black and the curls of gold. But the relieved spirit of the sufferer had flown to a realm where sorrow is unknown.

Soon loving hands raised the lifeless form of the beautiful Jollie Yarrow from its resting place in Z's arms. Mr. Yarrow placed an arm tenderly around the boy, and led him from the room, saying:

"Father and mother are crushed by this great bereavement; but we realize that the keener pangs of sorrow are yours, poor boy."

Z sat down by the window in an adjoining room and stared out into the deepening twilight. A bird poured forth an evening song from a branch above the window, and then flew away to its rest. The shadows deepened and the stars came out one by one, each seeming like a crystallized teardrop hanging from the vaulted sky. He gazed as if trying to penetrate the vail beyond.

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The next morning Mr. Yarrow came, and bending over him said hoarsely: "Come, my son, and view one of the most beautiful pictures that earth can afford. It may be a relief to you." He arose, and was led by Mr. Yarrow into the presence of death.

A beautiful white casket stood in the center of the room, and in it rested the lovely form. A most becoming bridal robe enveloped the form more perfect than a marble statue. A long bridal veil crowned the shapely head, and, draping gracefully

over the shoulders and breast, was festooned with orange-blossoms.

For some time Z gazed fixedly upon the picture. Then, kneeling beside the casket, he began to caress the beautiful brow and call fondly the name most dear to him, until Mr. Yarrow raised him up and led him away.

The next day a number of loving friends gathered at the cemetery to consign the mortal remains of Jollie Yarrow to the tomb. Mr. Hargood stood by the open grave, and pronounced the solemn words, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." If the mighty hand of God can mold the dust of earth into such forms of surpassing beauty for the tenement of an earth-born soul for a season, how beautiful must the heavenly body be that is prepared for the redeemed soul to inhabit through all eternity!

When the family carriage neared Ivy Bower, returning from Jollie's burial, Z raised his head from Mr. Yarrow's knee and exclaimed, "Ah! there she stands by the gate of the dove-cot waiting for me."

"Our dear boy is taking the fever," said Mr. Yarrow to his wife.

## CHAPTER XVI.

# Forsaken and Alone.

For many weary days and nights Z tossed deliriously on a sick-bed at Ivy Bower, and Mr. Yarrow sat almost constantly beside him. One day he opened his eyes to partial consciousness and said:

"I must have been quite ill. I would like to have Jollie come and see me again."

"She can never come to you again on earth, only in dreams," replied Mr. Yarrow, gently pressing his hand.

"Is it all true at last?" asked Z, faintly. "I am sure that she came and stood beside me a short time ago, and I rejoiced to know that it was all a horrid dream."

Mr. Yarrow calmly explained all to him, and he soon again lapsed into unconsciousness. During the succeeding days and nights he lived over again the scenes of his fondest hopes, but they were always blighted by some hideous intrusion which caused him constant agitation. The doctor and his anxious friends despaired of his life; but at last he began slowly to recover, and just before the beginning of the midwinter holidays he returned to consciousness. However, he regained his strength

slowly, and not until the early springtime was he able to leave his room.

The family at Ivy Bower tried to make things cheerful for him, but at the best the future presented a very gloomy prospect. He knew that he must find solace for his sorrow in active life. But he had lost to a degree the comforts of prayer. The Tempter had misguided his faith until he had almost wrecked it on the shoals of disappointment. He had a firm faith in God as an All-wise Creator and in Christ as the Savior of the world; but somehow a vague idea took possession of him that God had created and Christ had made provision for the redemption of the world to apply to whomsoever would partake of its gracious benefits, but otherwise the Deity had withdrawn from the interests of man and left him to fight life's battles alone. Thus the Tempter put forth his subtle power, and robbed a soul of its much needed peace.

If our eyes could only be raised above our selfish ambitions, we could see how all God's plans are right. Although our hearts are crushed at parting with our loved ones who cross death's river before us, we would take comfort in the thought of their celestial joys, and not ask the loving Heavenly Father to prolong earth's sorrows to them. Then would the anticipation of their joyous deliverance from pain fall like a balm on our aching hearts, and the echoes of heavenly joys like sweetest music to our burdened souls.

God knows the tension of our heart-strings. Let

His loving hand attune them to heaven's praise; and let us repeat with the psalmist, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

As the spring advanced, Z determined to be of use to some one. Therefore he sought out the sick and sorrowing in order to comfort and assist them. Shortly after he had regained sufficient strength to be about the city for a part of the day, he heard that March Carthurs was slowly but surely dying from disease brought on by a prodigal life. He also learned with sorrow that all his former friends had forsaken him, and that he was much alone in his suffering and remorse. He found his way to Mr. Carthurs's room as soon as possible.

The sick man received him with tears of gratitude, and often expressed regret that he had not known him better, but had almost hated him for no other fault than a humble station in life and a determination to win success by personal effort.

March Carthurs, society's pride, had greatly fallen in the favor of his friends. He had plunged into excesses with a zest that had dethroned all the real traits of manhood. The wealth that had been thrust upon him, and of which he did not know the value, melted away; and it was found that he would soon be deprived of this requisite to his favoritism. For some time he talked but little to Z, and the latter was found, almost day and night, silently administering to his comforts. One day he said to Z:

"Friend, I want to ask you a few questions, and, if you are the boy I take you to be, I will confide in you something of importance. In the first place, why did you come to me when all my former friends had forsaken me? During my more fortunate days I never spoke to you, nor of you, except in terms of derision. You certainly knew that I despised you, and was jealous of every possible favor shown to you by any one. I would gladly have blotted your very name and memory out of existence, had it been in my power. Yet I find that you alone will befriend me, when I am overtaken by the adversity which is inevitable to such a career as mine has been. Please explain yourself. Tell me why you are with me at this evil hour."

"Mr. Carthurs," answered Z, calmly, as he took the sick man's fevered hand in both his own, "I came to you because we are brothers, members of the same fallen, suffering race, and because my sympathy for you demands that I should bring you comfort in your affliction, if possible."

"Did you not remember that I had been your bitter enemy?" asked Mr. Carthurs.

"I certainly knew that you disliked me for some reason which I knew not," answered Z. "But I could not hold that against you when I learned that you were in need of sympathy. I thought that you would be kind enough to lay aside your prejudice, and allow me to visit you in the name of the Lord Jesus," he continued.

"O, you are a Christian, then?" said Carthurs.

"That explains it all. I think now I can trust you with what I have to say."

Z blushed as he saw how his light as a Christian had shown so dimly before this poor man that he did not know he was trying to follow Christ; and he answered:

"I have striven to be a Christian; but I fear I have sadly failed at times to do as Christ would."

"I am certain that I can trust you," said Mr. Carthurs. But I will also commission you with an unpleasant duty, for which, if you faithfully perform it, I am sure heaven will abundantly bless you. If you are successful in performing the task which I lay upon you, I will hereafter give you in brief, my life experience, which you may hang out as a hideous danger signal, to warn the youth off the shoals of sin, on which I have wrecked both soul and body, and am plunging into the abyss of endless remorse.

"In the first place, I must tell you that Boudine and I have for some time engaged in a business for which justice eagerly demands retribution. I will not here specify conduct that is too shocking to be rehearsed. But it is the saddest thing on earth that society is so blind to the real nature of those who work their way into its favors, only to accomplish their horrid designs upon unsuspecting ones whom they could reach through no other channel than that of seeming respectability.

"You doubtless remember the birthday party at Palmer Heights. Devil incarnate that I was, yet I could not help looking upon the blindness of fond

mothers on that occasion with utter contempt. Many times have I been led to think that the conduct of some mothers might be likened to an ignorant heathen placing her child in a den of fiery serpents, that it might be amused by their glowing colors.

"Well, at the birthday party was little Ella Fulton, and there Boudine fastened his poisonous eyes upon her to destroy her. I am a dying man, and I wish to do one good deed before I am gone. Boudine has communicated to me his intentions, and I know whereof I speak. He appeals to her nobler nature in the guise of heaven's richest gift, that of conjugal affections, in order to trample her beneath his bloodstained feet, and cast her faultless innocence and beauty to the greedy jaws of unspeakable shame. Miss Ella has been charmed by his handsome features and pleasant address. Even now she meets her would-be destroyer, who persuades her to keep her parents in ignorance of his attentions.

"Now, friend, I want you to go to Miss Fulton, tell her all I have told you, and persuade her to tell her parents all about Boudine's attentions to her."

The next morning, while Z was walking along the street, he met Ella Fulton, who was tripping along and singing in undertone, with no thought of sadness. She looked sober when she saw Z, and extending her hand said:

"Dear friend, I sympathize with you deeply in your great bereavement."

"My bereavement," replied Z, "is great; but I

fear a keener sorrow lurks for you if your eyes refuse to see before it is too late."

Ella stood looking at him in wonderment, thinking that he had lost his mind.

Z continued: "I refer to the attention paid you by Mr. Boudine, which can mean but disaster to you, if continued with your favor."

Ella drew herself haughtily away from him, saying as she flushed crimson:

"If you can find nothing else to talk about than to speak ill of my friends, I do not care to have further conversation with you."

Z turned very pale, and stood looking at her a moment in silence. His sad appearance touched the heart of the girl, and stepping up to him, she laid her hand on his arm as she said: "Pardon me for speaking thus harshly to you, but I was vexed. We will say nothing more on the subject."

"Ella," exclaimed Z, earnestly, "for heaven's sake hear me. Then if we must break friendship for what I have to tell you, I know the time will come when you will think more kindly of me than now."

"Speak on, then," said Ella, tremblingly. "Although I probably can never accord with what you have to say I can not doubt your sincerity as a friend."

Z then told her all that March Carthurs had communicated to him, and added:

"It is the dying man's wish that you should know all this."

She stood looking at him, defiantly at first, but gradually her manner softened, and when he closed there were tears in his eyes. She then took his arm saying, "Come and help me to tell my parents all that you have told me." Thus was Ella saved from impending ruin.

When Z returned to the room of March Carthurs, and told him what had occurred, he was elated over the successful accomplishment of the boy's mission. Then he said:

"I am now ready to relate to you some of my past life. As you probably know, I was born an only child in a family possessed of great wealth. I was not only indulged by my fond parents, but the relatives all seemed to vie with each other in indulgences which succeeded in thoroughly spoiling me during my childhood. I went through public school after a fashion, attending when I desired, but staying away when I chose. However, I was ambitious to become a well-informed man, and if my ambitions had been rightly directed, I might have made something of myself. But everybody agreed that I was so favored by fortune, I need not put forth energy on anything. Much of my time was spent in idleness or in aimless search for amusement. In due time I was sent to college; but I had contracted habits of idleness and prodigality that soon brought me into disgrace there. I returned home to the open arms of society, which invited me to the indulgence of all my coarser nature. I need

hardly say that my habits caused wealth to flow through my hands as water through a sieve.

"If I had been thrown out on the world penniless after I had wasted my first fortune, and compelled to earn my own living by the sweat of my brow, all might have gone well with me. But as if fate were against my reformation, one after another of my relatives left me means to gratify my selfish desires. At length I was led to see that wealth, be it never so much, would be squandered by my reckless life. I therefore sought a way to accumulate money without honest exertion; and Boudine and I have engaged in enterprises that, if justice were but meted out, would cause us to be looking from behind prison bars to-day.

"I know that the poor boy who toils hard for a living, often envies the heir of great wealth his life's prospects. But, under present social conditions, the poor boy has immeasurably the advantage of the other for ultimate success, as society furnishes pitfalls for the fortune-favored one that the honest toiler knows nothing about."

Here March Carthurs ceased speaking, almost exhausted by the effort he had put forth to tell all in his mind. His features became distorted, and his form cramped and rigid in a paroxysm of pain. Through the long weary hours of the night Z watched beside him as he writhed and tossed in unspeakable agony; for nature, so long abused, demanded a fearful retribution.

We will not follow the ravages of disease in its progress upon this unfortunate man, the victim of a false conception of social merit. Day after day he gave to Z sketches of his past life, always with solemn warnings against the shoals and breakers on which he had wrecked. One day, while Z sat beside him, he exclaimed: "O, society, where are your boasted claims of favoritism for your devotees? I have been your most ardent admirer, have chased your phantoms with a maddened delusion, determined to sip all the sweet nectar of the unsullied pleasure which you promised,—only to find myself overtaken by adversity and death, forsaken and alone."

In another paroxysm, March Carthurs's form and features became rigid and the eyes stared with a wild glare. At last he gave an unearthly moan, and the distended muscles relaxed in death.

As dies the drunkard in the hovel, whose name has become a term of reproach because he had long sipped the grog of the low and depraved, so died March Carthurs, society's pride, because he tarried long at the wine. And the good book which says, "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven," makes no distinction between the two, who find a common level in a drunkard's grave.

One day, after the death of March Carthurs, Z was walking aimlessly along the street, thinking what was best to do, when a hand was laid gently on his shoulder, and he turned to face Henry Bolte, who said, kindly:

"Dear friend, I am lonesome in my place of business. I would like to have you return to be my friend and companion, as in former days."

Z thanked him heartily and said:

"If I could be of any comfort to you, I would gladly come and stay with you. I appreciate your kindness more than words can express; but I fear that my presence would be to you more like the raven in Poe's poem than a friend to cheer you."

"Never mind that," replied Mr. Bolte, cheerily; "I shall be glad indeed to have you with me. I will endeavor to show you that Henry Bolte's friendship is worth the name, as I strive to make the pathway of life a little brighter for you. Say you will come the first of next week."

Z pressed his hand and said with tears of gratitude: "The old adage is true. A friend in need is a friend indeed," adding, "I very much need the comforts of your friendship at present."

"Be on hand, then, early next week," replied Mr. Bolte, patting Z's shoulder familiarly; and he then hastened on down the street, whistling merrily.

"O that earth had many more like him!" said Z to himself, as he turned and walked slowly up the street.

The following Monday morning finds Mr. Yarrow preparing to start on an extended business trip. He had been detained on account of his bereavement and Z's continued ill-health; but he felt that he must go as soon as the boy was well again. The two sat long together, on the evening before, in confidential

conversation, and Z probably understood as much of Mr. Yarrow's plans as any one.

After Mr. Yarrow had bidden his wife and William farewell, he came to Z, and placing a hand on his head, looked him fondly in the eyes and said:

"My own dear boy, I will ever cherish a double affection for you. On you I must bestow the love I cherish for my sainted daughter, who, I feel, lives fondly in your memory. I believe I understand you as but few can. Let me know that you will ever remember me as the kindest of fathers; and although the world may say that we are not related to each other, we know that deep hidden from human eyes are kindred ties that bind our hearts together as father and son."

Z could not utter a word in response to this affectionate appeal, but Mr. Yarrow understood the boy's heart as they fondly embraced each other.

Mr. Yarrow climbed into a carriage, and was driven to the depot. Z strolled out over the grounds of Ivy Bower. It was a beautiful spring morning, and all nature smiled with joy and harmony. But to Z all seemed like a hollow and empty dream. What was Ivy Bower or springtime or song of birds to him without Jollie, or even Mr. Yarrow? He strove manfully to be calm, but he found that he could not endure those familiar scenes under such conditions.

He went back to the house, and bidding Mrs. Yarrow and William adieu, was soon at Mr. Bolte's furniture store, where he was cordially received by his old friend, and installed in his old place as clerk.

A few weeks passed, and Z strove earnestly to be absorbed in business for Mr. Bolte's sake; but, with familiar scenes around him, he found that there was an appalling vacancy in everything of interest to him. He soon learned that if he ever succeeded in drowning his sorrow he must part with the scenes of his conflicts.

He communicated to Mr. Bolte his intentions of seeking other scenes and associations, adding:

"I feel like a child that has wandered away from home and mother, and has become wearied with aimless wanderings. I long to return and lay my aching head on mother's knee, and sleep away the memories of the past."

Mr. Bolte was reluctant to let him go, but, after reflection, he concluded that a change would be better for him. So he entered into the boy's plans with interest, and soon Z was preparing to start for the home of his childhood.

Let us walk with him a few minutes on the morning of his departure. He had bidden adieu to all his friends, Mr. Bolte last of all, and is wending his way to the northeast of the city. We will go with him as he ascends the hill to the cemetery. He passes hastily by a number of stately monuments and kneels beside a white marble column that stands over a beautifully decorated grave. In the marble is graven the figure of two hands clasped, and above this is the form of a soaring dove, with its eyes fixed on the heavens. Engraven beneath is the name so dear to him. He clasps the cold marble in his arms, and repeatedly kisses the name.

Mr. Garland is passing, from having visited the grave of his mother, and his heart is tender. As he observes the boy kneeling at the grave he says to himself:

"Can that be my boy rival, with the sunny curls and laughing blue eyes? Yes, it is he, though the eyes have faded to a dull sad gray, and the golden curls have fallen, and in their place is hair of sober brown. Mr. Garland steps up beside Z, and placing a hand on his head, said tenderly:

"I see it all plainly now. If one would win a true heart he must possess a heart equally true. I know of no other as worthy of her affections as you were, dear boy. Believe me, I deeply sympathize with you in your bereavement."

Z expresses his thanks, and Matthew Garland is soon gone.

Z begins to pray earnestly, and a sense of the Divine presence steals into his soul. The still small voice whispers, "My grace is sufficient for thee." "God does hear and answer prayer," exclaimed Z, triumphantly. He then resolved to be true to Jollie's dying charge, and rises with a firm purpose to battle manfully for the right. He gazes long and fondly at the inscription in the marble, pressing his lips repeatedly to the name. Then, gathering two opening rosebuds from Jollie's grave, one of pink and one of pure white, and, pinning them to his bosom, he goes to the gate, and, entering a carriage that awaits him, is carried rapidly away.

## CHAPTER XVII.

# Conclusion.

We will lift the veil on the scene of our narrative after a lapse of years. Time has wrought its usual changes in everybody and everything.

James Hugh Brass has failed to reform. Consequently, he has failed to get his intended fortune, and has left for parts unknown.

Tardy justice has at last overtaken Dorrance Boudine, and he is now growing gray, wearing the stripes behind prison bars.

Clarence Cameron, becoming thoroughly disgusted with the hollow claims of society, has reformed his habits, and, taking a plain and unpretentious wife, has settled down to the life of an honest farmer.

The Worthingtons' wealth has melted from them like snow under a summer sunshine, and Palmer Heights is occupied by a sturdy man of business, who has risen from a humble station in life, and won success by honest personal effort.

Mr. Worthington died at the first approach of adversity; and Dorrance Boudine succeeded in winning the affections of Geraldine, only to trample her down to a life of shame. She was afterward rescued

by her mother, and now the two live a humbled and lonely life, associating with no one.

The Rev. Mr. Worley saw brighter prospects in a secular vocation, but his ambitions overreached his business ability, and he was greatly humbled by failure.

Lydia, finding a knowledge of saving grace in Christ, heard the Macedonian cry from heathen lands. She consecrated her talents to the Lord, and went over the waters to point the sin-blinded ones to the Savior.

Mr. Hargood still stands behind the sacred desk, pleading with the unsaved. May occupies another parsonage, and looks upon the man whose name she bears as the superior representative of a superior class of men.

Ella Fulton's talent has been properly cultivated, and now she charms her hearers by her singing.

Charles Fulton owns and manages a large grocery-store, but his chief pleasure is in his splendid home on Lincoln Avenue, where little Viola Bailey Fulton, sister to Monroe and Nellie, now presides.

Ivy Bower shows signs of neglect. Mr. Yarrow sleeps beside the beautiful daughter to whom he imparted his life's secret, and the winds mingle the grasses over their graves.

William Yarrow still lives with his mother at Ivy Bower, but, disappointed in all his ambitions, has shut himself up from the outside world, and is known as "The Hermit."

Henry Bolte is still in his old place, the furniture-store. Although the people generally prophesy that he will be financially ruined, yet, by some waif whom he befriends, he gradually accumulates wealth; and many an unfortunate but honest boy has cause to rejoice in the day that he first met Henry Bolte.

On Arbor Street stands a new and imposing residence, and on a placard over the door we read, "Monroe Bailey, M. D." Let us peep inside this home. See that crowing, chattering wee bit of a boy, trying to learn to walk, now helped and now hindered by two fond grandmothers, who coax him to make the effort and then, first one and then the other, snatch him up for a good hugging. Who is that girl wife and mother who is endeavoring to look the importance of the household dame, though a childlike smile diffuses her face? Surely we have seen her before. Yes, for she was little Bertha Bleucher, now Mrs. Dr. Bailey.

Mr. Bleucher's long abused health had succumbed to disease, and his mortal remains now rest beside the grave of little Roy. Mrs. Bleucher resides with her daughter. The elder Mrs. Bailey also lives with her son. Her younger children all have homes of their own. She and Mrs. Bleucher love as sisters, and are considered invaluable to the home of the doctor and his wife.

Near by, and in plain view of the residence of Dr. Bailey, stands the little white cottage known as the dove-cot. By the request of Mr. Yarrow no one

has crossed its threshold since the day that Jollie stood by its gate awaiting the coming of Z. The shutters have not been opened for years. The walls have grown gray with age, and the tasty lawn has become a mass of wild growth. The wind sways the branches of the lonely elm, and sadly sighs from every bough.

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Let us look now upon a scene many miles removed from the one we have just been viewing.

A recess bell has just rung at the village schoolhouse as we arrive on our tour of inquiry. The principal steps out on the threshold, and looks around over the grounds. Whenever his eyes meet the eyes of a student his look is answered by a smile.

Across the street a little woman, with a sunny face and long waving tresses of brown hair, steps to the window of a cottage and answers the smile of the teacher, expressing a language that only hearts can interpret. A fair-haired little girl and a wee bit of a prattling boy step up beside the little woman, and exclaim gleefully, "O mamma, mamma, I see my papa."

Monroe Bailey and Charles Fulton, who have come a long distance to visit an old-time friend, are walking up the street with one of the villagers. They exchange greetings with the principal, and pass on, still engaged in conversation.

"There has been a marked change for the better

in the morals of our little village since the professor came to us," says the villager.

"No doubt of it," replies Charles Fulton. "But I do not understand how our cousin can content himself with so humble a station in life after the lofty ambitions of his youth. I understand that, after his extraordinary bereavement, he spent some time in college preparing himself for what we supposed some notable career."

"There is where you do not understand him at all," answered Monroe, mildly. "His theory is that it demands more real nobility of soul to occupy a humble station in life worthily than to grace a position of high honor that is likely to be the gift of accident.

"His virtues manifest themselves most clearly in his ability to fill any station in life to which he may be called in an exemplary manner.

"Others delight in addressing him by the title of professor; but I love to speak of him in the strange initial of his boyhood, which is a household term with us. For in our alphabet of true friendship, the first as well as the last and the best of all is the letter

Z.